

Syria seeks new U.S. ideas

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria said on Saturday U.S. calls for more talks between Syria and Israeli ambassadors in Washington would be meaningless if the United States had nothing new to offer to Damascus. It urged U.S. President Bill Clinton to put pressure on Israel to accept full withdrawal from the Syrian Golan Heights to break a deadlock in Damascus's negotiations with Israel. "What is the new thing in which the dialogue should start? What is the subject of dialogue?" the government daily Al Thawra asked. "If America has nothing to offer there is no value for such dialogues," it said. Syria's ambassador to the United States, Walid Al Muallam, returned to Washington last week in response to repeated U.S. calls to resume peace talks with his Israeli counterpart, suspended since December. But Syrian officials said the envoy would first hold talks with the U.S. team supervising the peace negotiations to see if there was anything new that could justify a resumption.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in Jordan by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية - مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية - الراي

Algeria suspicious of NATO dialogue

TUNIS (R) — Algeria on Saturday expressed suspicion over its exclusion from a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) initiative to open dialogue next week with Israel and four North African countries on threats to stability in the Mediterranean. NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes said on Friday he would hold talks with the ambassadors of Israel, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia in Brussels on Feb. 24 on the threats of extremism and violence to the area's stability. Mr. Claes' invitation, which was accepted by the five countries, did not include Algeria, where the army-backed government is now virtually fighting a civil war with armed Muslim militants. NATO sources have said the alliance did not want to be seen taking the government's side against its foes. The Algerian news agency APS, in the first official comment on NATO's initiative, said in a commentary the absence of Algeria from the talks "appears to contain ingredients for interference in a sovereign state's internal affairs without excluding, furthermore, possible intimidating intentions."

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Iran denies role in Iraq oil sales

NICOSIA (R) — Iran has denied any role in helping Iraq export oil in violation of U.N. sanctions, the Iranian news agency IRNA said on Saturday. Iran's United Nations mission issued a statement on Friday denying a "fabricated" New York Times report on Thursday that said Iraq had devised a secret system to export crude oil and refined products to neighbours Turkey and Iran. The Iranian mission described the report as "unjust attempts by certain circles, mainly in the United States, to implicate ... Iran, without any supporting evidence, in the alleged smuggling of the Iraqi oil and refined products," IRNA reported.

Clinton: No decision on Moscow visit

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton insisted Saturday that he has made no decision on an invitation to Moscow on May 8 following reports that he would not go because of heavy-handed Russian use of force in Chechnya. Russian President Boris Yeltsin had invited Mr. Clinton for the 50th anniversary celebration of the Allied victory over Nazi Germany in World War II but a senior U.S. official said Friday that Mr. Clinton would postpone any visit to Moscow until combat in the break-away Russian republic ended. Mr. Clinton declined to say Saturday if Chechnya was a consideration. "I want to make very clear we have made no decision about the May schedule," the president said at a morning photo session. "There are lots of issues involved because there are lots of 50th anniversary events celebrating the end of World War II. But we literally have not had a meeting on that."

Balladur suffers new dips in popularity

PARIS (AFP) — The popularity of French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur dipped sharply in a new poll released here Saturday, two months ahead of a presidential election in which he is the leading candidate. The poll, for the Sunday newspaper Journal du Dimanche, gave Mr. Balladur a 46 per cent popularity rating, 10 points down on his 55 per cent showing last month. Dissatisfaction with Mr. Balladur also rose, to 48 per cent from last month's 41 per cent. Pollsters IFOP carried out the survey from Feb. 9 to 16, questioning 1,886 people throughout the country. The poll confirms recent findings that Mr. Balladur, seen as a runaway winner at the start of the year, has been slipping in public esteem. The three main market research companies, BVA, IFOP and SOFRES, published surveys last Tuesday that gave him only a narrow lead against his nearest rivals in the first round of voting on April 23, though he was still seen as winning the May 7 second round comfortably.

Paris rally protests Algeria killing

PARIS (AFP) — Several hundred demonstrators protested in Paris Saturday against anti-fundamentalist violence in Algeria after the killing of a prominent women's leader by suspected Islamic fundamentalists. The 300 demonstrators, mainly Algerians who have fled their country after the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, were protesting against the killing of Nabila Djahanne last Wednesday. The protestors, divided among those who support and those who oppose talks with fundamentalists to end the conflict, also called for the repeal of family law introduced by the then one-party regime in 1984. Unknown gunmen shot Ms. Djahanne, 35, dead in the city of Tizi Ouzou, 110 kilometres east of Algiers (see page 12).

PNA condemns anti-Israel attacks, urges expansion of self-rule to W. Bank

GAZA CITY (AP) — The Palestinian self-rule government condemned Palestinian militants' attacks on Israelis in a statement early Saturday, but also warned peace was "in real danger" unless Israel extended autonomy to the West Bank.

"We condemn and reject all these attacks that are aimed against the interests of both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples," said the statement, issued after PNA President Yasser Arafat convened his ministers late Friday to report on the peace talks. Mr. Arafat left Saturday for Paris, where he was expected to meet with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

The statement affirmed the Palestinians' full commitment to the talks but also expressed "deep sorrow at the way the peace process is going."

The Palestinians are upset at delays in extending the nine-month-old Gaza-Jericho autonomy to the West Bank and at the closure imposed on the Palestinian areas after Jan. 22 attack in which 21 Israelis died in central Israel. Since October, 56 Israelis have died in attacks claimed

Arafat pursues talks with Peres in Paris

PALESTINIAN LEADER Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres were to hold talks here late Saturday on the sidelines of a privately-organised Middle East peace symposium, sources said.

Aides to Mr. Arafat said the meeting would probably take place around midnight (2300 GMT). A Palestinian official in Gaza said earlier Mr. Peres had asked Mr. Arafat to meet him to help save the deadlocked peace talks.

Mr. Peres meanwhile thanked Egypt in a written statement published Saturday for trying to help "Israel and the Palestinians overcome their difficulties in current negotiations."

Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres were due to meet in a Paris hotel following a dinner hosted by French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.

They were expected to continue discussing issues to do with Israel's reopening its borders last Sunday to thousands of Palestinian workers living in Gaza.

Mr. Peres was due to leave the French capital late Saturday after the talks with Mr. Arafat.

by militants opposed to the peace process.

Although the closure was eased after a meeting Thursday between Mr. Arafat, Mr. Peres and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, tens of thousands of Palestinians remain cut off from jobs in Israel.

The statement denounced the closure as well as Israel's settlement activity around Jerusalem, detention of Palestinian prisoners and delays in implementing the autonomy accord.

"All this has put the peace

(Continued on page 7)

U.S. to speed up write-off of remainder of Jordan's debts

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and the U.S. have reached agreement on speeding up the process of writing off Jordan's \$488 million in debts to the U.S., Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti said on Saturday.

Mr. Kabarti, who returned to Amman Saturday after a several-day visit to the U.S., said it was agreed that the U.S. administration would present a proposal to Congress to write off the remainder of Jordan's debts this fiscal year instead of writing them off during the 1995-96 period as agreed with the American administration.

Mr. Kabarti participated in a meeting in Washington with the foreign ministers of the U.S., Egypt, Israel, Jordan as well as the director of the Palestine National Authority (PNA).

The meeting, chaired by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, discussed means of helping the stalled Palestinian-Israeli negotiations move forward and the

prospect of having a Middle East region free of nuclear weapons.

The minister said the international community should help the Palestinian people economically in order to break the cycle of violence.

"To be able to break the cycle of violence, the international community should also attempt to break the siege imposed on the Palestinian people, leading to starving them and might lead to what can be described as mass economic sanctions," the minister told Jordan Television.

He said Arab countries would discuss the issue of signing the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) within the framework of the Arab League and the Non-Aligned Movement to reach a unified stand on the issue before it is put to discussion at a March 17 meeting.

Jordan, he said, is like other Arab countries. "It cannot feel secure while threatened by nuclear arsen-



Abdul Karim Kabarti
als and reactors on its borders and while there is no international monitoring of them." Mr. Kabarti said in reference to Israel's nuclear programme.

"The issue is not signing the NPT. Most of the Arab countries, including Jordan and Egypt, signed the treaty in 1968, and pressuring Israel

(Continued on page 7)

King takes part in Paris dialogue

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday delivered a live message and engaged in a dialogue with French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur at the opening ceremony of the international symposium held in Paris entitled: "The Future of the Mediterranean Area After the Peace Process," a statement from the International Press Office of the Royal Palace said.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) symposium is held under the patronage of Mr. Balladur. It is designed to highlight the European role in promoting the peace talks and more specifically, France's initiative in securing a peaceful Middle East region.

During the three-day long symposium, participants will discuss the most important issues pertaining to the peace process including the future of Jerusalem, minorities and refugees, the future of new Israeli settlements, economic cooperation and the region's security requirements.

Attending the symposium to take part in these discussions on behalf of Jordan is a delegation headed by Minister of Health Aref Batayneh. Also attending to speak on the issue of water and arms control respectively are Dr. Munther Haddadin, Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber and Dr. Abdullah Toukan.

The symposium will feature workshops for discussions of the different topics on the agenda. Participating in the discussion groups are internationally renowned journalists, political advisors, historians and government officials. President Hosni Mubarak, President Yasser Arafat, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, King Hassan II, Foreign Minister Amr Musa of Egypt and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of Israel will also be delivering statements at the conference.

It is organised by the French Jewish Radio Shamom with help from France's TF1 television channel and Al Ahran.



His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday receives Australian Trade Minister Bob McMullan (Petra photo)

King meets Australian minister, reaffirms approach to peace

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday said Jordan had opted for the attainment of a just and comprehensive peace for the benefit of the peoples in the Middle East region and their future generations.

Speaking during a meeting at the Royal Court with the visiting Australian trade minister, Bob McMullan, the King said it was important for the future generation to live

in security and stability and enjoy free, secure and dignified life.

Mr. McMullan conveyed to the King greetings from the Australian prime minister and government and their appreciation of his sincere efforts for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Mr. McMullan expressed the Australian government's appreciation of the King's leadership and his en-

deavours to serve his nation. He said Australia will provide assistance towards progress in various fields.

He said Australia was keen on bolstering economic and trade relations with Jordan.

Present at the audience were Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and Australia's Ambassador to Jordan Jonathan Sheppard (see earlier story on page 3).

Taliban demand snags U.N. plan

KABUL (Agencies) — The U.N. peace plan for Afghanistan was under threat Saturday as the Islamic armed movement that has taken the country by storm took position outside the city and demanded control of security in Kabul before joining the process.

U.N. envoy Mahmud Mestiri said after a 90-minute meeting with the Taliban movement at nearby Charasayab that "they insist on a neutral security force before the transfer of power takes place" to a proposed 30-member council.

Mullah Borjan, a Taliban commander based in Charasayab, the former headquarters of ex-Premier Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami faction, told AFP the neutral security force in Kabul

should be the Taliban.

He said the long-delayed transfer of power from President Burhanuddin Rabbani to the body "cannot take place" with rival forces holding different parts of Kabul.

The council, to be dominated by neutral figures, is at the core of the U.N. plan to bring peace to this country, wracked by a factional war which has left more than 20,000 people dead since the communist regime fell in April 1992.

The student-led Taliban, who have grown to an estimated 25,000 fighters, this week overran the base of Mr. Hekmatyar, arch rival of Mr. Rabbani. Mr. Hekmatyar has fled to an outlying town.

Ahmad Shah Masoud, the enforcer of Mr. Rabbani's Jamiat-e-Islami forces, con-

trols 90 per cent of Kabul, while rival Abdul Ali Mazari, who heads the Shiite Hezb-e-Wahadat faction, still holds sway in parts of the western suburbs.

On Saturday the Taliban were just 15 kilometres from central Kabul — and a mere 100 metres away from Mr. Masoud's frontline fighters, who were backed by several Russian-made battle-tanks.

There has been no shooting yet between the two sides but on Friday a Taliban fighter was wounded by an anti-personnel mine and hospitalised in Kabul.

The Taliban have branded the rivals in Kabul as "criminals" because of their factional fighting, and have vowed to impose strict Islamic

(Continued on page 7)

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هنا من الأجر

Clan accord, paid police keep peace in Somali port

KISMAYU, Somalia (R) — An intricate clan alliance, not the gun, is largely responsible for peace in this once anarchic Somali port city where famine and warfare killed tens of thousands of people.

Kismayu was the prize in a two-year war between militias of General Mohammad Said Hersi "Morgan" and Colonel Ahmad Omar Jess, but has enjoyed 10 months of calm under a clan coalition controlled by the Morgan.

Unlike the capital Mogadishu, there are no U.N. peacekeepers here — the last Indian contingent left the city in December.

And also unlike Mogadishu, where tension is rising because of the departure this month of the "Blue Helmets," Kismayu residents are again cultivating their fields.

Few guns are visible on Kismayu's pot-holed streets and the "technical" battlegroups that terrorized Mogadishu are rare.

Kismayu is calm. Markets buzz with noise and Somali music. U.N.-funded policemen patrol the town and arrest criminals.

"There has been no war here since the U.N. troops left and there shall be no war in the future because the people are fed up of fighting," said Colonel Ahmad Garasi, commander of Kismayu's police force.

"Clan elders are also keen to maintain the peace that is prevailing, they are keen to see this city rebuild itself as the economic engine of Somalia that it once was," Col. Garasi added.

Gen. Jess, the main threat to peace here, is a broken man without money and arms to keep his militia intact. He has retreated to Mogadishu where the lives on handouts from his mentor, warlord Mohammad Farah Aidede.

More than 300,000 Somalis abandoned their homes in Kismayu and fled to neighboring Kenya after the 1991 overthrow of soldier-dictator Mohammad Siad Barre. But encouraged by the peace here they are returning at a rate of 350 a week in an operation coordinated by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

"They are taking advantage of the peace that is here," said Melnie Nicolai, a nurse with the charity Medecins Sans Frontieres-Belgium (MSF-B).

"Most of these are urban middle class who want to return to Mogadishu but can't until the city calms. Their second choice is Kismayu," she added.

Kismayu is the country's second largest port and capital of the southern farmlands. Boasting some of the country's most fertile land, it stands out as Somalia's main economic hope.

The Australian catering giant Morris Supplies, fearful of violence that threatens to engulf Mogadishu after the U.N. pullout, is setting up base at what is dubbed as "Hammer Hill" on a spit that forms Kismayu's harbour.

"We had to leave Mogadishu because it is a contentious city. We thought Kismayu was the place to go to and we are ready to help the people here so long as they do not shoot at us," a U.S. engineer with the firm said.

Morris Supplies, which catered for 30,000 U.N. civilians and peacekeepers in Somalia, hopes to go into business with Somalis, reviving Kismayu's looted fish factories and setting up new ones.

Five aid agencies — UNICEF, WFP, World Concern, Muslim Aid Agency, and MSF — have returned to Kismayu. All are going about their business without militia protection that is a must in Mogadishu. The local police protect their workers.

But relief workers say Kismayu's peace may be temporary.

The local police, credited with enforcing peace in Kismayu and surrounding villages and of reconciling clans dotted around the region, will be without their \$200 per month salaries once the U.N. Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) leaves in early March.

It is not clear who will take over the role of paying their wages and officials worry this may create a vacuum and provoke a return to clan hostilities.

"This is something that worries me a great deal. My question is who will pay my men after UNOSOM departs. I still have found no answer," Col. Garasi lamented.

Americans return with non-lethal arsenal

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Nine months after their less-than-glorious departure from Somalia, U.S. soldiers are returning to the battered east African state to protect withdrawing U.N. troops. This time they are taking few chances.

The 7,200 U.S. soldiers mustered for next month's launch of Operation United Shield will have more than conventional arms to defend themselves. They will have state-of-the-art, non-lethal gear to help control unruly crowds.

The Pentagon wants particularly to avoid a repeat of the confrontation between Pakistani U.N. soldiers and a crowd of Somalis shortly after the American pullout last May.

At that time, rock-throwing women and children had obstructed U.N. troops chasing some snipers and a firefight broke out, leaving 24 Pakistanis and 20 Somali civilians dead.

About 57,000 U.N. soldiers, mostly Egyptians, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are currently in Somalia, where the U.S.-led troops first waded ashore in December 1992 to feed a starving population amid fierce factional fighting.

Between 2,000 and 3,000 soldiers, most of them Pakistanis are due to leave Mogadishu next month in a pullout aided by U.S. forces, including 3,000 Marines on four warships heading towards Somalia. The others are on warships already off the coast.

Defence Secretary William Perry said that the U.S. troops returning to Somalia would be "equipped with the conventional weapons sufficient to protect the force and to protect any U.N. force that they are dealing with."

"We also have equipped them with some non-lethal equipment in case they run into a situation requiring crowd control, when they want to avoid having to use weapons that could be lethal."

For supplies and guidance the U.S. military turned to one of the most experienced forces in crowd control: the Los Angeles Police Department.

Sticky foam shot from a gun as a "high-tech lasso," barrier foam laced with tear gas, wooden and rubber pellets instead of bullets. The arsenal is designed to provide protection without spilling blood.

The Pentagon justified the use of such weapons as necessary for the mission "to get the UNOSOM (U.N.) forces out, to extract the equipment that we leased to the UNOSOM forces and to do this with no loss of life."

Mr. Perry said that "from my point of view there is nothing secret" about the arms. But the Somalia venture would mark the first time they have been used in a high-profile operation.

But the New York Times reported, however, that Pentagon lawyers had drawn the line at laser ray-guns and refused their deployment on humanitarian grounds. Defence Department officials refused to comment.



KING HOSTS IFTAR: His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday hosted an iftar in honour of tribal leaders and representatives of public and private institutions in Aqaba Governorate. The banquet was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasbi, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, Prince Asim Ben Nayef and Aqaba Region Authority President and Acting Aqaba Governor Faysal Al Khasawneh. The King and the guests performed Al Maghreb prayers together (Petra photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

18 to go on trial, two freed in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Eighteen Islamists were ordered Saturday to stand trial before an Egyptian high security court for the murder of 15 people, including two police generals. The alleged members of the outlawed Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah are accused of a string of murders carried out in 1993 in the Qena province of southern Egypt. The attacks were carried out in revenge for the April 1993 death sentences against seven militants for an attack on a tourist bus in Qena that wounded six Germans and two Egyptians, the prosecution said. Three minors are among the accused, on charges of keeping a watch on police movements for the Gamaa. The public prosecutor's office, meanwhile, freed two out of 27 Muslim Brotherhood officials who have been under arrest since January on charges of supporting Islamic militants waging war on the government. The Brotherhood has no legal status but has been tolerated by the authorities.

Pakistani police arrest Zia's son

RAWALPINDI (R) — The son of the late Pakistani President Mohammad Zia Ul Haq, Ejaz Ul Haq, who brandished an unlicensed Kalashnikov at a rally and challenged police to arrest him, was duly detained on Saturday. A senior police official said Ejaz, a member of parliament and leading foe of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, was arrested for possessing and displaying an illegal weapon, punishable with 10 and seven years jail respectively. Local newspapers said Ejaz brandished the assault rifle in Rawalpindi on Friday at a rally, declared it illegal and dared the police to arrest him. He was protesting at the conviction of another opposition deputy for having an unlicensed gun. Sheikh Rashid Ahmad was sentenced by an anti-terrorist court on February 9 to seven years' hard labour and a fine of 200,000 rupees (\$6,490) for keeping an illegal Kalashnikov.

Troops kill 38 rebel Kurds in Turkey

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Turkish troops killed 38 rebel Kurdish guerrillas in a battle in southeast Turkey on Saturday, security officials said. They said two soldiers were also killed in the battle, which occurred at rocky slopes near the rugged Hani town in the province of Diyarbakir. They did not give other details. It was the bloodiest single clash reported from Diyarbakir province for nearly six months. Troops killed another 33 militants of the outlawed Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) in the nearby Dicle town earlier in the week. The army has concentrated its efforts since October on a drive against some 3,000 rebels hiding in the densely-wooded mountains of Tunceli province, north of Diyarbakir. Security forces in the western town of Nazilli arrested on Saturday five members of the PKK and seized several pistols and ammunition, Anatolian news agency said.

Mubarak to visit Japan in March

CAIRO (AFP) — In March President Hosni Mubarak is to visit Japan from March 13-16 on a mission to reinforce economic ties, the official Egyptian news agency MENA announced on Saturday. Mr. Mubarak, following foreign Minister Amr Musa who laid the ground for the visit when he travelled to Tokyo earlier this month, will be accompanied by several ministers and businessmen. The balance of trade is heavily in favour of Japan, which in 1992 exported \$278 million worth of goods and imported products worth \$92 million from Egypt, according to official figures in Cairo. Egypt's debt to Japan of around \$2.5 billion dollars was rescheduled in 1992.

Libya rejects charges of rights violations

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Libya has protested to the United Nations over a recent Voice of America (VOA) broadcast criticising its human rights record and called for an impartial investigation of the rights situation in both countries.

In a letter to Secretary-General Boutros Ghali published on Friday, Libyan U.N. Representative Mohammad Azwai said his country "refutes the sophistries and fabrications" contained in the Feb. 9 broadcast which he said were aimed at "misrepresenting the human rights record in Libya."

"At the same time, they are to be seen in the framework of the vicious campaign being waged by the United States of America against Libya in order to obstruct its endeavours to achieve economic and social development and ensure the welfare of its people," he added.

Mr. Azwai said Libya, as on many previous occasions, was prepared for "an impartial inquiry into human rights violations, in any form whatever, and into the grounds for these false allegations."

At the same time, he added, "we insist on an inquiry in the very country that accuses other countries of violating human rights, namely the United States of America."

The General Assembly, the Security Council and other relevant bodies should "make appropriate arrangements for the conduct of the necessary inquiries," he said, while affirming Libya's national sovereignty its total rejection of interference in its internal affairs.

"The United States of America, which claims to be the world's greatest defender of human rights, must look to itself and must examine its own record of numerous human rights violations, of oppression and of racial discrimination, particularly against blacks and American Indians."

"The events that took place in Los Angeles provide the best indication of that," he added, apparently referring to rioting which followed acquittal of four policemen in 1992 on charges of beating up a black motorist.

Mr. Azwai said the United States had been "alarmed and disconcerted by the political stability enjoyed by the Libyan people... and by its steadfast character despite the iniquitous economic embargo imposed as a result of the hegemony of certain major powers in the Security Council, chiefly the United States of America itself."

He was alluding to sanctions first imposed on Libya in 1992 for failing to surrender for trial two men indicted in the United States and Britain for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed 270 people.

British trade delegation holds talks in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AFP) — British businessmen held talks Saturday with Iraqi oil and foreign ministry officials, joining a rush for lucrative contracts with Baghdad once U.N. sanctions are lifted.

The trip by representatives of 27 companies was organised amid great secrecy as London is still fiercely against any lifting of the oil and trade sanctions imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Edmund Sykes, a spokesman for the Iraqi-British Interests Group set up two years ago, said the delegation had come with the approval of the British authorities to explore the Iraqi market and get an idea for the future.

Russian, French and Italian companies have led the rush to set up deals with Iraq, notably in the oil sector, ahead of the end of sanctions. Iraq has the second-highest oil reserves in the world, after Saudi Arabia.

The British delegation arrived late Friday at the same time as a similar group from Spain and just ahead of about 15 Jordanian industrialists who left Amman Saturday for talks in Baghdad on possible joint-ventures.

Iraq may ban people from Hajj for lack of foreign exchange

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq will not allow its Muslims to make the pilgrimage to Mecca this year if there is a continued shortage of foreign exchange caused by U.N. sanctions, state newspapers reported.

President Saddam Hussein chaired a cabinet meeting this week on the issue, the newspaper said.

They carried an emotional appeal to "Islamic states and forces of good in the world" to urge Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates to release \$25 million of Iraqi assets to cover the expenses of the pilgrimage.

Without the funds "the Iraqi authorities will be unable to process applications for the pilgrimage to holy lands (Saudi Arabia)," the cabinet said.

Iraqi assets held by the three countries because of the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis amounted to more than \$700 million, it added.

The newspapers said the ban would apply to all Iraqis. It would be the first time that Iraq has barred pilgrimage to Mecca for purely economic reasons and the newspapers blamed this on the punitive U.N. trade sanctions imposed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Iraq's Endowments and Religious Affairs Ministry has so far made no arrangements for this year's Hajj.

The cabinet said processing Hajj applications without the required funds would put a strain on foreign currency reserves and result in "further price hikes of foodstuffs and consumer goods, inflicting additional harm and pain on the Iraqis."

Last year only about 500 Iraqis made the trip to Mecca.

The newspapers said Saudi Arabia was obliged to accept about 19,000 Iraqi pilgrims this year, according to a quota agreed at a meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference. They also said Saudi authorities had raised the cost of the Hajj and accused Saudi police to harass Iraqis in previous years.

Performing the Hajj to Mecca once in a lifetime is one of the five essential obligations for Muslims.

With no end in sight to the sanctions, the plummeting dinar and soaring inflation in Iraq have put the costs of the long pilgrimage well beyond the reach of the most Iraqis.

The government has recently taken new measures to try to put a break on price rises, including a hefty travel tax and price controls. The steps have halted the decline of the dinar, at least for the moment, and cut the price of some foods.

Iraqis wishing to travel abroad now have to pay 100,000 dinars instead of 40,000. The new rate, though a lot of money in Iraqi terms, is worth \$110 on the black market.

This week the Iraqi dinar sank to its lowest levels to the U.S. dollar. Baghdad traders said a dollar fetched 950 dinars early in the week but was hovering now at 850.

But traders said the measures, though effective so far, would not have a far-reaching impact on prices if the U.N. sanctions continued. The government took similar measures last year but failed to stabilise the economy.

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PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Cocottes Minutes

17:30 Que Le Milleur Gagne

18:00 Des Trains Pas Comme Les Autres

19:00 News In French

19:15 Profiles of the Muslim World

19:30 Charlie Chaplin

20:00 Erichus "Aftermath"

21:00 Step by Step

21:30 News in English

22:30 News in English

Feature film: "Boundaries of the Heart"

23:59 Till We Meet Again

PRAYER TIMES

04:53 Sunrise

06:11 Sunrise

11:49 Dhuhr

14:59 Asr

17:58 Maghreb

18:46 Isha

CHURCHES

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Amman, Tel. 810740

Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 601757

Terraced Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

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Armenian International Church Tel. 625226

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 6895

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Mn./Max. temp. 5/15

Amman 12/24

Aqaba 4/17

Deserts 4/17

Jordan Valley 11/22

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 15, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 50 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Aqaba 42 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mukhlis Huleisa 819221

Dr. Shahaneh Al Izzah 733774

Dr. Shatawi Abu Zayed 737962

Dr. Khalil Al Tustiq 615715

Firas pharmacy 661912

Fordows pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 837065

Natroukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644445

Shmeisani pharmacy 621644

Natroukh pharmacy 623672

Najih pharmacy 647632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu (—)

Ajouds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Walid Halaeh 962790

Khalifeh pharmacy 965417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 670341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 845402

Traffic Police 846591

Public Security Department 670321

Hotel Complaints 405800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 847467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 1110230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 625101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 775111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 690100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 676781

RJ Flight Information 18-532181

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 18-532181

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 81501532

Khalidi Maternity, J. Ann 6642810

Akileh Maternity, J. Ann. 624412

Jabal Amman Maternity 64362

Mulla, J. Amman 636130

Palestine, Shmeisani 6647174

Shmeisani Hospital 669121

University Hospital 645845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667278

The Islamic, Abdali 66012757

Al-Abli, Abdali 6641646

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7710113

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7511126

Amy, Marka 8161115

Queen Alia Hospital 812240341

Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital 18-953323

Zarqa National Hospital 18-953323

Jbn Sina Hospital 18-953323

Al Hikma Modern Hospital 18-953323

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital 18-532181

Great Catholic Hospital 18-532181

The Al Nafes Hospital 18-532181

IQAB:

Princess Haja Hospital 18-532181

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 18-532181, 5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:35 Bangkok (RJ)

06:35 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

09:55 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

10:15 Larnaca, Damascus (RJ)

10:15 Beirut (RJ)

10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

10:45 Vienna, Aqaba (RJ)

12:50 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

12:50 Brussels, Paris (RJ)

17:55 London (RJ)

18:10 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

12:35 Manama (GF)

14:25 Moscow (SU)

20:45 Cairo (MS)

20:20 Beirut (ME)

22:55 Istanbul (TK)

01:10 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:25 Beirut (RJ)

11:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

11:15 Athens, Rome (RJ)

11:30 Frankfurt (RJ)

11:50 Aqaba, Vienna (RJ)

12:15 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)

20:15 Cairo (RJ)

20:30 Jeddah (RJ)

21:00 New Delhi (RJ)

21:30 Damascus (RJ)

22:00 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)

23:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

23:15 Dhahran (RJ)

01:45 Sanua (RJ)

02:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:45 Rome (AZ)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/400

Banana 680

Banana (Mukammal) 620

Cabbage 120/60

Carrot 180/100

Cauliflower 140/80

Cucumbers (large) 200/120

Cucumbers (small) 360/280

Eggplant 200/120

Garlic 100/80

Grain 280/200

Lemon 280/200

Marrow (large) 200/100

Marrow (small) 350/200

Onion (green) 300/200

Onion (dry) 340/200

Orange 600/400

Pepper (hot) 1000/800

Pepper (sweet) 450/300

Potato 300/220

Radish 180/100

Spinach 120/60

String Beans 600/700

Tomato 250/180

Turnip 300/100

Home

Princess Basma from QAF in

ANMAN (Petra) — As part of the Ramadan charity campaign spearheaded by the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saurous visited that town in the South Mazar district of Karak Governorate and announced a two-part economic plan totalling JD5,000 for socio-economic development activities.

The Princess, who chairs the QAF board of trustees, addressed a rally in the southern town urging its residents towards social solidarity during the holy month of Ramadan.

She called on all the voluntary groups in the town to step up efforts in developing women's and children's services, expressing hope that local women will be given a greater role in socio-economic affairs.

Also Basma, McMulla, and other women's groups were present.

Inspectors issue to merchants d

By Lana Hussein

Amman — Ministry of Public Relations issued 125 citations in 15 days of Ramadan in efforts to enforce the law, particularly the fasting laws.

According to Mohammed Zaytoon, director of the Public Relations Department at the Ministry of Hajj, price violations during the holy month became a sharp increase because of the need for food and other commodities. "Thus opening the door for merchants to monopolise the prices," he added.

It is noticed that violations almost tripled during Ramadan with an average of 125 citations issued a day, which includes only 40 citations issued Saturday.

According to the ministry, the summer months are the most critical for the products.

He said the set prices are items by which to place price.

Before Ramadan, announced were in the requirements for shipments of vegetables every week.

WHAT'S GOING ON

SEMINAR

Seminar (in Arabic) entitled "The Future of Jordanian-Palestinian Relations" by Dr. Asad Rahmani at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

PLAYS

The Arabist entitled "We are Not Yourselves" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

The Arabist entitled "The Chap of Samar" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of oil paintings by Ibrahim Al Alami at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

Exhibition of handicrafts by Kuyumjan at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Exhibition of the "Chap of Samar" at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Exhibition of works by the Arabist at the Royal Cultural Centre.

1993 total

AMMAN (R) — Last year exports of fruit, according to the Marketing (AMO) Survey, totalled 214,700 tonnes of fresh fruit, none of which was exported to Jordan's Arab neighbours.

The AMO said that the majority of the fruit, none of which was exported to Jordan's Arab neighbours, was sold in the local market.

Last year's total exports of fruit, according to the Marketing (AMO) Survey, totalled 214,700 tonnes of fresh fruit, none of which was exported to Jordan's Arab neighbours.



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saturday chats with children at a kindergarten in That Ras in Karak Governorate

Princess Basma announces donation from QAF in Karak governorate

AMMAN (Petra) — As part of the Ramadan charity campaign spearheaded by the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saturday visited That Ras town in the South Mazar district of Karak Governorate and announced a two-part donation totalling JD5,000 for socio-economic development activities.

The Princess, who chairs the QAF board of trustees, addressed a rally in the southern town urging its residents towards social solidarity during the holy month of Ramadan.

She called on all the voluntary groups in the town to step up efforts in developing women's and children's services, expressing hope that local women will be given a greater role in socio-economic affairs.

Princess Basma said the QAF's JD3,000 donation will help promote local women's activities, and a donation of JD2,000 will promote the work of the local kindergarten.

The Princess looked in on local social services and watched the process of distribution of in-kind assistance to 300 needy families as part of the Ramadan charity campaign.

Local voluntary youth groups were involved in the distribution.

Princess Basma receives Mrs. McMullan

Also Saturday Princess Basma received Robin McMullan, wife of Australian Minister of Trade Bob McMullan at the headquarters of the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development, a QAF statement said.

Mrs. McMullan, whose academic interests include cultural studies, communications and women's issues, showed great interest in the briefing she received about the development projects of QAF in Jordan, said the statement.

Discussion, said the statement, focused on the activities of the Jordanian National Committee for Women, which is hosted by QAF, and the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in September.

Mrs. McMullan expressed her admiration of the development efforts by and for Jordanian women and the activities of the Jordanian non-governmental sector, the statement said.

Visiting trade minister says Australia ready to help in rift valley development

AMMAN (I.T.) — Australian Trade Minister Bob McMullan Saturday opened talks with Jordanian officials by voicing his country's readiness to help the Kingdom in desert farming and in developing the Jordan Rift Valley by providing Australian expertise.

Speaking at the start of his talks with Industry and Trade Minister Ali Abul Ragheb, Mr. McMullan said that in the peace era Australia is willing to help make Jordan a central market for the sale of Australian products to the countries of the region, noting that the opening of the regional office of the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation (AMLC) in Amman would help this process.

The regional office is expected to be formally inaugurated by Mr. McMullan during his current visit which started Friday, according to Australian embassy officials.

In reviewing the Middle Eastern economies, Mr. McMullan expressed his country's willingness to take part in the Amman economic conference due to open in October this year.

He voiced his country's readiness to increase its imports of Jordanian phosphates, potash and fertilisers.

Mr. McMullan's statements came at the outset of the Jordanian-Australian Joint Committee meeting which is entrusted with promoting Jordanian-Australian economic and trade links.

Ministry of Industry and Trade sources said that the talks are expected to cover

the prospect of launching joint ventures and increasing Jordan's exports to Australia.

Welcoming the Australian minister and his accompanying delegation, Mr. Abul Ragheb underlined Jordan's desire to promote its trade and economic cooperation with Australia.

He stressed the need to adjust the trade balance between Australia and Jordan as it is now heavily in favour of Australia and said it is hoped that Canberra would import more Jordanian phosphate, fertilisers and potash. Mr. Abul Ragheb also said that while Australia's exports to Jordan in the past few years have increased, Jordan's exports to the Australian markets stood still.

Australian embassy sources said Australia sells Jordan nearly \$60 million worth of meat, livestock, dairy products and cereals and imports \$10 million worth of fertilisers, potash and phosphate.

Referring to peace in the region, Mr. Abul Ragheb said it was expected to usher in a new phase of economic development and a better standard of living for its people.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said Jordan was in the process of modernising its investment laws with a view to attracting more investors in most domains.

He said the coming Amman economic conference was expected to back Jordan's investment efforts.

Following the two ministers' meeting, subcommittees



Visiting Australian Minister of Trade Bob McMullan and an accompanying delegation Saturday meet with Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and ministry officials on the first day of trade cooperation talks (Petra photo)

emanating from the joint committee started their own meetings to discuss joint projects in industry and agriculture and in training of personnel in transport and tourism, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, which said that the subcommittees will finalise their meetings Sunday with the signing of the minutes of deliberations.

Mr. McMullan Saturday also met with Agriculture Minister Mansour Ben Tarif and discussed agricultural cooperation and Jordan's imports of Australian meat as well as the exchange of expertise in agricultural fields.

Petra quoted Minister of Agriculture officials as saying that Jordan last year imported 563,571 head of sheep from Australian markets.

Mr. McMullan and his delegation met later with Minister of Water and Irrigation Saleh Irsheidat and discussed cooperation in irrigation techniques.

Mr. Irsheidat told his guest that Jordan was interested in cooperating with Australia in the water sector and would like to benefit from that country's expertise in the construction of dams and in developing artesian wells.

He also voiced Jordan's appreciation of Australia's past assistance in irrigation, noting that the Ministry of Water and Irrigation had sent Jordanian cadres to Australia to acquire that country's expertise in water related affairs.

In reply Mr. McMullan said that Australia was willing to cooperate with Jordan in the implementation of water projects in the Kingdom.

Mr. McMullan was later expected to hold meetings with the Jordanian Businessmen's Association and the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce.

Inspectors issue 2,318 citations to merchants during Ramadan

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ministry of Supply inspectors issued 2,318 citations to merchants during the first 15 days of Ramadan in efforts to crack down on violations of the supply law, particularly during the fasting month.

According to Mohammad Zaytoon, director of the Public Relations Department at the Ministry of Supply, price violations witness a sharp increase during the holy month because people's need for food and other commodities doubles, "thus opening the door for merchants to monopolise the prices."

"It is noticed that violations almost tripled during Ramadan with an average of 155 citations issued a

day, while on regular days, citations usually average only 40 to 50," Dr. Zaytoon told the Jordan Times Saturday.

According to Dr. Zaytoon, the main aim of the ministry is to protect consumers by setting and monitoring prices and ensuring the quality of the products sold.

He said violations include not following the set prices, selling some items by quantity rather than by weight, and failing to place price tags on items.

Before the start of Ramadan, the ministry announced that foodstuffs were in sufficient supply to meet the local market's requirements. Additional shipments of meat and vegetables were expected every week during the

month. The ministry also announced that it would tighten its measures to ensure that food prices are within regulations. Often, prices rise sharply during Ramadan.

According to Dr. Zaytoon, 66 inspectors are covering different areas in Amman. In addition, he said, there is an office in the ministry designated for citizens who want to complain of any violations of pricing by merchants.

Dr. Zaytoon said violations are referred to court. He said fines start at JD 30 and could be as steep as JD 10,000.

Imprisonment in some cases, especially if the person charged is a repeat offender, is an additional penalty, he added.

Industrialists head for Iraq to follow-up talks

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A delegation of Jordanian industrialists Saturday headed for Iraq for follow-up talks on Jordanian-Iraqi cooperation in industries and joint ventures that were initiated during discussions held in early January.

One of the key themes for the visit is to explore whether Jordanian industrialists could cooperate with the Iraqis in launching industries at military installations that have been turned into facilities for civilian purposes after the Iraqi government met with the terms of the Gulf war over Kuwait, informed sources said.

Talks were initiated on such cooperation during the last visit of a similar delegation, and this time some of the industrialists in the delegation would actually visit the proposed

sites for industries for closer information and possible planning, said the sources.

The delegation, led by Amman Chamber of Industry Chairman Khaldoun Abu Hassan, will stay in Iraq for nearly a week during which meetings are scheduled with senior Iraqi government officials and private sector businessmen.

"The discussions would involve the Iraqi ministries of industry and trade, the federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce and Industry, related institutions and Iraqi businessmen," said an Amman Chamber of Industry spokeswoman.

"Some of the delegation members will also travel outside Baghdad to some of the industrial sites in the country to explore possibilities," added the spokeswoman.

The team includes three members of the board of directors of the Amman Chamber of Industry and

representatives of several industrial sectors.

The delegation has taken with it a 16-truck convoy of food and medicine and other relief supplies as a gift for the Iraqi people suffering under the 56-month-old international sanctions, against the country.

"The sanctions, imposed after the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, remain in place pending United Nations satisfaction that Baghdad has met with the terms of the ceasefire that ended the war over Kuwait in early 1991.

Under the sanctions, dozens of Iraqi military installations have been dismantled, and many of them still have equipment that could be used for civilian purposes, and this is an area where Jordanian and Iraqi businessmen could cooperate to launch projects," the sources noted.

"Once the sanctions are

eased or lifted, the possibilities of Jordanian-Iraqi industrial cooperation are unlimited," said one source, who, like others, did not want to be identified. Specifics of the cooperation under immediate discussion were not available.

The Amman Chamber of Industry has established what businessmen describe as a very good working relationship with Iraq, particularly in the past four years when it closely coordinated with the Iraqi private sector and filled in the vacuum created by the international isolation imposed on the country's institutions.

Recently, the Amman Chamber of Industry was successful in mediating a business dispute over prices and lifting a logjam in Jordanian vegetable oil exports to Iraq.

Iraqi Minister of Trade Mohammad Mehdi Saleh

visited Amman early this month and held talks with government officials as well as businessmen. During those meetings, Mr. Saleh voiced his country's keen interest in following up the talks on industrial cooperation with Jordan.

According to businessmen, one of the areas being explored is joint ventures in food-processing. "The facilities are available in Iraq, but most of them do not have the capital to run them," said a businessman. "An external involvement in the projects would mean taking in technology as well as running capital for the plants."

The businessman noted that food, including raw material to produce foodstuffs, and medicine are exempt from the international sanctions, and as such, some of the projects under discussion need not wait for an easing or lifting of the sweeping embargo.

WHAT'S GOING ON

SEMINAR

★ Seminar (in Arabic) entitled "The Future of Jordanian-Palestinian Relations" by Dr. As'ad Abdal Rahman at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

PLAYS

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "You Are Not Yourself" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "The Chap of Samargand" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Sahab Ibrahim at Al Bayraq Art Gallery, Sports City intersection (Tel. 688701).

★ Exhibition of handicrafts by Hasmij Kayumjian at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Photo exhibition at the Friends of Archaeology Center.

★ "Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Center.

★ Exhibition of works by Qasim Al Samir at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery.

★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Health ministry to expand services in Zarqa governorate

ZARQA (Petra) — Zarqa Health Department Director Mohammad Turk Saturday said that the Ministry of Health plans to carry out several projects in Zarqa Governorate this year to boost medical services in view of growing demand.

Speaking at a meeting of government-employed physicians and specialists, Dr. Turk said that among the projects are the establishment of two health centres in Azraq and Ba'irawi at a cost of JD 500,000, a JD 350,000 health centre in Jannaa near Zarqa to serve more than 60,000 inhabitants and a

health centre at Qasr Hallabat at the cost of JD 100,000.

Referring to last year's achievements, Dr. Turk said that his department built a comprehensive health centre at Al Mushreifeh and a primary health centre at Al Falah district, both of which offer services to a total of 70,000 inhabitants.

Also last year the department built a health centre at Duleil together with adjoining warehouses for drugs and other relevant facilities, and opened a laboratory for the mother and child care centre.

1993 agricultural exports total JD 74.3m — AMO

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan last year exported 318,300 tonnes of vegetables and fruit, earning the country a total of JD 74.3 million, according to the Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO) Saturday.

An AMO statement said that the majority of exports (nearly 214,700 tonnes) consisted of fresh vegetables and fruits, noting that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) topped the list of importers with purchases totalling 123,000 tonnes, followed by Bahrain and Lebanon.

Jordan's exports to non-Arab countries last year amounted to 5,300 tonnes only, added the statement. Last year's exports of vegetables registered a de-

cime of 34,600 tonnes over the 1993 figures, said the statement which noted that most of the vegetable exports consisted of tomatoes, green peppers, eggplants, squash, cabbage, beans and lettuce, as well as dried onions, cucumbers and parsley.

On the other hand, fruit exports registered an increase over the 1993 figures, according to the statement. It said melons, lemons, grapes, olives, oranges and grapefruit were among the major exported fruits.

The statement referred to agricultural imports last year, noting that they totalled 26,500 tonnes, of which 60.5 per cent were vegetables. These included potatoes, dates, garlic and apples.

VTC trainees open exhibit

AMMAN (Petra) — Women trainees at three vocational training centres Saturday opened an eight-day exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) to display their handicrafts.

The trainees, who are graduating from the vocational centres of Wlbadat, Manarah and Um Nuwara operated by the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), are displaying products they made at these centres together worth JD 13,000.

VTC Director General Ahmad Atwan, who opened the exhibition, said that the show aims to highlight the trainees' potential and skill which helps them to earn a living.

He said the exhibition, displaying more than 500 pieces including embroideries, is part of the VTC's endeavours to promote vocational train-

ing for women in line with the corporation's current five-year plan.

Dr. Atwan said that the 1993-1997 plans aims at improving the quality of the VTC programmes and upgrading the level of graduates in a bid to help them find jobs in the local market.

The VTC, he said, is currently studying plans to expand its operations and open more training centres in all parts of the country.

According to the five-year plan also, the VTC will step up its cooperation with regional and Arab organisations for the sake of exchanging expertise that would help the VTC's centres cover up to 40 per cent of their expenses through their own income, up from 20 per cent at present, said Dr. Atwan.

So far the VTC's centres in Jordan have graduated

Jordanian charity to buy food for Chechens with Libyan aid

AMMAN (AP) — Libya has donated \$100,000 to victims of the recent conflict in Chechnya, and Jordan's Chechen community is buying food and medical supplies with the money, a volunteer organisation said Saturday.

Yousef Belto, spokesman for the Friends of the Chechens Society, said Libya had pledged another \$150,000 in aid for Muslim Chechens in the next few weeks.

Russia sent military forces to Chechnya on Dec. 11 to quell a secessionist rebellion there led by President Dzhokhar Dudaev. In the ensuing war, thousands have

been killed and maimed, and civilians displaced from their homes.

A ceasefire was announced last week after Russian forces overran most of Chechnya. Mr. Belto said the Libyan aid came after the country's leader Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, met with a delegation representing Jordanian Chechens late last year.

"Libya agreed to give money to a Libyan agent in Jordan to purchase food and other humanitarian supplies for Muslim Chechens," Mr. Belto said in an interview with the Associated Press.

He said Libya also offered to treat wounded Chechens in its hospitals.



Women trainees from Vocational Training Corporation centres display their handicrafts at the opening of an eight-day exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre (Petra photo)

99,000 trainees, said Dr. Atwan who expressed appreciation to the 3,800 factories and other businesses which, he said, have closely cooperated with the VTC in providing on-the-job training to

VTC graduates.

Referring to new projects, Dr. Atwan said that the VTC plans to open new centres for men and women at Irbid, Beit Ras, Zarqa, Hashemeh

and Tafleeh, noting that another four centres are now being set up. These, he said, are located at Abu Nuseir, Muab, Marka and Wadi Mousa.

Commerce, industry chambers urge opportune investment climate

AMMAN (Petra) — The

presidents of the Amman Chamber of Industry and the Amman Chamber of Commerce Khaldoun Abu Hassan and Haider Murad called on the government to create the right investment climate to encourage the private sector to initiate projects that would eventually help reduce the rate of unemployment in Jordan.

The private sector, particularly the industrial sector, is the most appropriate area for training university and community college graduates and offering them jobs, said Mr. Abu Hassan in an interview with the Jordan News Agen-

cy, Petra.

The industrial sector currently employs around 110,000 workers who earn a total of JD 237 million annually. It is paying direct and indirect fees and taxes amounting to JD 314 million, according to last year's figures, Mr. Abu Hassan said.

Over the past four years, 17,500 new companies were registered with the Ministry of Industry and Trade with a combined capital of JD 900 million and 35,000 new jobs, he added.

Referring to the Sahab Industrial City, Mr. Abu Hassan said that it houses 331 industrial firms and factories

employing 12,400 workers.

He stressed that the unemployed could receive training with these industries whose exports accounts for 90 per cent of the country's overall exports.

His views were echoed by Mr. Murad who said that only through new investments and new income generating schemes can the country deal with the unemployment issue and subsequently with poverty.

The public sector's employment potential is diminishing at a time when the private sector holds great potentials, he added.

Mexican troops move deep into former rebel territory

RANCHO YAXOLOB, Mexico (Agencies) — Only three days after the president said he was trying to avoid confrontations with rebels, Mexican troops began moving deeper into formerly rebel-occupied territory in eastern Chiapas state.

The movement came a week after President Ernesto Zedillo ordered thousands of troops to encircle the area that had been a base of support for the rebel Zapatista National Liberation Army.

Two armoured vehicles with 90-mm cannons, eight Humvee jeeps and four large troop carriers were seen leaving the nearby village of Lazaro Cardenas early Friday. Soldiers said they were headed to Venustiano Carranza, about five miles (eight kilometres) deeper into the zone.

"This is still Zapatista territory," a bespectacled

commander, who would not identify himself, said as he waved to the mountains above this rolling valley. "They're all up there. If we leave, they'll be right back down."

In a communique released Wednesday, Zapatista leaders repeated their stance: They want to renew peace talks, but the army's presence in the mountains is an obstacle.

A church-backed peace commission called on both sides to return to negotiations before the end of February. Among other conditions, the National Mediation Commission urged government troops to abandon villages they have occupied since last week.

Terrified peasants Thursday felled huge trees and dug trenches in an attempt to impede the army's advance. "We are just peasants. We

are innocent, but the army comes to grab us and accuse us of being with the Zapatista army. We don't want to happen here what happened to Morelia," said a man in the village of La Victoria.

The village of Morelia, at the head of the Tzucaneja River valley, has been abandoned by most of its 1,200 inhabitants.

On Jan. 7, 1994, about 30 soldiers entered the town and reportedly tortured and killed three men and dumped their bodies on the roadside. A forensic investigation by the U.S.-based Physicians For Human Rights confirmed the villagers' story, but the Mexican government has taken no action in the case.

Meanwhile an explosion on a gasoline pipeline in the southeastern Mexican state of Tabasco injured 23 people, some seriously, state Governor Roberto Madrazo said

Friday. Mr. Madrazo said he could not confirm news reports of at least seven dead in the blast, which took place just before midnight Thursday (0600 GMT Friday).

"There are 23 injured, three have already gone home, eight are serious and two are in intensive care," Mr. Madrazo told reporters. Flames leapt some 50 yards (metres) in the air from the blast and fires raged through Friday morning.

Officials of state oil monopoly Petroleos Mexicanos (Pemex) said an explosion on a 24-inch gasoline pipeline near the border between Tabasco and Chiapas states caused secondary blasts on two gas pipelines.

Reforma newspaper said at least seven people had been killed in the blast, but Mr. Madrazo and Pemex could not confirm any dead.



Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin introduces members of the delegation to the Polish Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak during the welcome ceremony at the court of the Government Building in Warsaw. Mr. Chernomyrdin is in Poland for an official two-day visit (AFP photo)

Walesa tells Chernomyrdin: NATO entry is our business

WARSAW (R) — Polish President Lech Walesa, in a blunt retort to Kremlin leader Boris Yeltsin, has told Russia that Poland would press for NATO membership whether Moscow wanted it or not.

"You know our stand: We will strive to join NATO and we are not going to ask Russia about it," Mr. Walesa told visiting Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin Friday evening.

Mr. Walesa's comments, distributed to news organisations by the Polish president's office, came less than two days after Mr. Yeltsin had restated Russia's outright opposition to any expansion of the Western military alliance into Eastern Europe.

But Mr. Walesa made clear what Poland, dominated by Moscow for most of the last two centuries, thought of the matter, restating the Polish position to the Russian prime minister in person.

His desire for membership of the Western alliance was not directed against Russia or its interests, he said. But Poland would not back down.

As if to underline his stance, Polish Acting Defence Minister Jerzy Miliewski clinched an agreement in Washington Friday on expanded defence cooperation with the United States.

Washington announced that it was prepared to sell advanced weapons such as

F-16 fighters to Poland and several other former Soviet Bloc states, for the first time since the cold war ended.

Mr. Yeltsin, addressing the Russian parliament Thursday in a prominent state of the nation speech, urged NATO to back Russian democracy rather than seeking to isolate the Kremlin in Europe.

Attacking plans for "hasty expansion," Mr. Yeltsin said: "This continent... has already generated two global military catastrophes, and we do not want Europe and the world to return to old or new division lines."

NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes said Friday the alliance was not out to isolate Russia but it would not give Mr. Yeltsin a veto on its enlargement policy towards Eastern Europe.

Mr. Chernomyrdin himself has sought a pragmatic stance, telling Polish reporters before leaving for Warsaw that he did not want differences over NATO to harm economic relations.

He was due Saturday to sign a series of economic agreements, including one clearing the way for two to start in April on the \$2.5 billion Polish section of a pipeline to bring natural gas from Siberia and on to Western Europe.

The other concern East-West transport projects, telecommunications, fishing, Polish construction in Russia's Kaliningrad enclave, customs cooperation, nuclear

emergencies and laying the groundwork for general economic cooperation.

The theme of Mr. Chernomyrdin's visit Friday and Saturday has been to focus on useful and correct economic and political relations rather than to emphasise differences.

Relations between the two countries, clouded by the decades of Soviet influence over Poland which ended in 1989, have been troubled over NATO and other issues, including Polish concern over Russia's military action in the breakaway Chechnya region.

Mr. Chernomyrdin himself put off a visit scheduled for November after Russian travellers reported being beaten by Polish police at a Warsaw railway station.

"Last year was a year of wasted opportunities," Mr. Walesa told Mr. Chernomyrdin. "We must think over the reasons for the areas where we do not understand each other," he added.

The economic ties are so important for both sides that Mr. Chernomyrdin decided to come even though Poland is in political chaos following last week's decision of Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak to resign, under pressure from a hostile Walesa.

Mr. Chernomyrdin was due to hold more talks with Mr. Pawlak and meet his probable successor, Parliament Speaker Jozef Oleksy, who is trying to form a new cabinet.

Leaders fail to arrive for Burundi summit

BUJUMBURA (R) — A regional summit on central Africa's refugee crisis was cancelled Saturday because none of the invited government leaders showed up, a senior U.N. official said.

No head of state had flown into Burundi's capital Bujumbura — still closed down by a general strike while the country searches for a new prime minister — by early Saturday and the U.N. official said the summit was off and no new date had been fixed.

"The initiative has to come from within and, although the U.N. was willing to support the meeting, there has proved to be insufficient initiative," said Abdul Kabia,

executive director of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR).

Diplomats had earlier questioned the value of any regional presidential gathering on refugee crisis in the absence of Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko, who also missed a similar summit in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in January.

The presidents of Rwanda, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania had also been invited.

Shooting broke out and hand grenades exploded in Bujumbura early Thursday after Prime Minister Anatole Kanyenkiko resigned. But no casualties were reported and residents said the violence

was no more than normal in the city which has been under dusk-to-dawn curfew since December to curb ethnic feuding between the majority Hutus and rival Tutsis.

Central Africa's latest refugee crisis began last April when the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were killed on returning together to Rwanda from peace talks in Tanzania. Their plane was shot down as it came into land.

A three-day conference earlier this week in Burundi on the 3.8 million refugees and displaced people in the region agreed on a plan hailed by the U.N. refugee agency UNHCR as a key document.

Sihanouk appeals for peace with rebels

SIEM REAP, Cambodia (R) — Cambodia's King Norodom Sihanouk Saturday made an emotional appeal to senior Khmer Rouge guerrilla leaders to lay down their arms and halt their war against the government.

King Sihanouk's appeal follows confirmation of heavy casualties among government forces in fighting around the key Khmer Rouge base at Anlong Veng in the South East Asian country's far north.

"Please don't let our people, our nation, continue this suffering," King Sihanouk said when opening a new school in Siem Reap town, 250 kilometres northwest of Phnom Penh.

"Please, those Khmer Rouge who still regard themselves as the king's children, come back to national society, lay down your weapons and stop fighting in order to provide security for the people," the 72-year-old king added to applause from a crowd of about 5,000.

The dry-season military operation to secure the northern region has resulted in hundreds of government casualties, mostly from mines and boobytraps, soldiers involved in the fighting told Reuters Friday.

Exact numbers of killed and wounded on both sides were not known. A senior military source with close knowledge of the fighting said Saturday the army was in a position to



Khmer Rouge defectors pledge allegiance to the royal Cambodian government at a camp near Phnom Penh. Thousands of guerrillas have defected to the government in the last year, yet fighting continues in many parts of the countryside (AFP photo)

capture the Anlong Veng Base, which is close to the Thai border.

"They (army) are preparing a serious and good operation. The planning is professional. I think it (final assault) will be very soon," the source said.

He added that the military had learnt from last year's ill-fated operations when government forces seized Anlong Veng and another key stronghold only to lose them both within a month because of poor planning and lack of discipline.

Japan, U.S. to mark Iwo Jima anniversary

TOKYO (AFP) — The 50th anniversary of the landing of U.S. troops on the island of Iwo Jima, their first major victory on Japanese soil during the war in the Pacific, is reopening old wounds and causing concerns in Tokyo.

The tiny island — which is just eight kilometres (five miles) long and 4.5 kilometres (2.8 miles) wide — was the site of one of the bloodiest battles of World War II in the region.

In the month from the U.S. landing on Feb. 19 until March 16, 1945, about 21,000 Japanese soldiers and 6,821 U.S. marines died on Iwo Jima, which lies 1,250 kilometres (781 miles) south of Tokyo.

Many of the imperial troops, including their commander, General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, were incinerated or buried alive in the kilometres of underground tunnels criss-crossing the island.

Iwo Jima later became a strategic staging post for the B-29 bombers sent to attack the Japanese mainland.

The resistance to the death put up by Japanese forces on Iwo Jima was later used by the Americans as an argument for dropping the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which they said sped up the war's end and cut U.S. casualties.

The battle was immortalised by a photograph and a statue in Washington of a group of U.S. marines planting the "Stars and Stripes" flag on Mount Suribachi on Feb. 23, 1945. But more recently, the scene was said to have been a set-up.

Fifty years on, the United States is planning a memorial ceremony on the island of March 14, ahead of September's commemoration in Hawaii of Japan's surrender on Aug. 15, 1945.

Treaty on global warming to be re-examined — maybe

UNITED NATIONS (R) — A month before a key climate treaty conference in Berlin, delegates from 130 countries failed to agree on how to prevent global warming in the next century.

A meeting of Inter-governmental Negotiating Committee that ended Friday was to lay the groundwork for the first formal review, beginning March 28 in Berlin, of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change as a first step.

This landmark treaty was agreed at the June 1992 Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, and has been signed by 167 states and ratified by 120 of them. It requires developed countries to take action aimed at capping greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000.

"It's too late to accomplish this by the year 2000 but it's not too late to modify behaviour by 2010," said conference Chairman Raul Estrada-Oyuela of Argentina.

Most signatories agreed and believe targets have to be strengthened for the next century. But they were unable to reach consensus about whether current goals were "adequate" or "inadequate," due to strong opposition from some oil-producing nations, led by Kuwait.

Instead the meeting agreed that previous targets were a "first step in meeting the

objectives of the convention."

Said Michael Zammi Cutajar, the U.N. executive secretary for the committee: "We are inching ahead in the form of some rather tortuous language couched in the form of a new decade — the adequacy change which goes step by step."

Delegates, he said, decided that "present commitments are a step but only a first step and maybe some more steps will be taken in Berlin."

Carbon dioxide is chief among the so-called greenhouse gases that scientists, assembled by the United Nations, say are causing global warming and threatening the planet with climate changes, raising the prospects of floods and drought.

Greenhouse gases are likely to rise at least three per cent at the turn of the century, even if current worldwide emissions of carbon dioxide are trapped at present levels, they say.

The United States has the highest rate of emissions of 20 tons per person. India has the lowest, mainly because it has less industry. Spain and Switzerland, among the wealthy countries, have the least fumes per head.

To meet its goals, the Clinton administration had put in place a series of voluntary programmes and incentive schemes now threatened by an opposition Republican Congress.

Its negotiators, however, were considered disruptive by the major environmental groups in bringing obligations of developing countries in sections of the treaty that applied only to developed nations.

The United States was joined by Canada, Australia and New Zealand — but not the European Union — in insisting developing states take on new commitments.

The treaty was devised on the premise that industrial states, particularly Eastern and Western Europe, take the first steps to change consumption patterns because they were the biggest polluters.

"These negotiations have widened the immense gap between what the world's scientists are saying must be done and what industrialised governments are prepared to do," said Bill Hare of Greenpeace International.

One proposal by the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) called for industrialised countries to cut carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels by 20 per cent from 1990 levels by the year 2005. But U.S. officials said they would oppose this scheme and the European Union would also.

Nevertheless, the suggestion of new commitments was alarming to John Schaefer, executive director of the industry-run Global Climate Coalition. He said his group

objected to the fact new proposals were even considered when the previous targets had not yet been evaluated.

Mr. Schaefer said he was apprehensive that eventually international taxes, regulations and standards would be accepted that would change the nature of the world economy.

Meanwhile, scientists have found the ocean is helping to destroy a chemical that depletes ozone in the Earth's atmosphere; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said Friday.

The chemical, methyl bromide, accounts for as much as 10 per cent of the destruction of stratospheric ozone, which is the Earth's barrier to the sun's ultraviolet light.

The ocean was believed to be the source of much of the methyl bromide in the atmosphere, but a study by the NOAA discovered much less of the chemical in the eastern Pacific Ocean than expected.

The study suggests the ocean was destroying more methyl bromide than it produced, the scientists said.

"The results suggest that 30-40 per cent of the methyl bromide in the atmosphere is destroyed in the ocean and that, consequently, its lifetime in the atmosphere is 30-40 per cent shorter than previously believed," said James Butler, co-author of the study.

Unknown Van Dyck discovered in Liechtenstein palace

VADUZ (AFP) — A previously unknown work by the Flemish painter Van Dyck depicting a seven-year-old boy has been discovered at the palace of the reigning monarch of Liechtenstein, Prince Hans Adam II, royal aides said Friday. Experts from the Swiss Institute for the Study of Art identified the painting as a work by Antoine Van Dyck dating from 1625 during restoration work in the royal collection, one of the finest in Europe. The prince was given the painting, previously attributed to an unknown artist, as a wedding present in 1967.

Female students barred from men's dormitories

DHAKA (AP) — Adding insult to insult, women students are now barred from entering male dormitories at Dhaka University. Campus authorities tightened the regulations. Women already are in revolt against a 40-year-old rule that they must be in their own dorms by sunset and must sign a registry. "This is another blow to our freedom of movement," said Ms. Habiba Suni, a student leader.

Women account for one third of the 28,000 students at Dhaka University, the largest campus in predominantly Muslim Bangladesh. Earlier this month, the women began a campaign against the sexist dormitory rules, holding frequent rallies to condemn the administrators as male chauvinists. The women say they will shut the university in protest for one day Sunday. Authorities have formed a committee to review the rule. At the same time, they tightened rules barring men from inviting women into their dorms. Men have never been allowed to visit the women's quarters. The new restriction came after a woman was found ill at a men's hostel last week. "We don't want to protect the girls from the bad boys, and that's why we are preventing them from visiting the men's hostels," said Abdul Hashem, head of a men's dormitory.

The issue has set off a debate in newspapers, with public opinion divided. Many of the students read feminist author Taslima Nasrin, who targeted the restrictions as an insult to womanhood before she fled Bangladesh last August after a death threat by a fanatic Muslim group. Ms. Nasrin is on bail under charges of blasphemy against the Koran. She is in England on a lecture tour but lives in Sweden.

Germany to criminalise marital rape

BONN (AP) — Parliament Friday moved to make marital rape a crime by throwing out an 1871 law that considered women property of their husbands and put sexual contact in the couple beyond the reach of the law. Chancellor Helmut Kohl's party, which previously argued that criminalising wife abuse would weaken the family, has agreed to the reform for the first time. A new law's passage was expected later this year. "The idea of marriage has changed," said Horst Eymann of Mr. Kohl's Christian Democratic Union, during Friday's parliamentary debate. "Marriage today is a partnership of two people with equal rights." A third of German wives have been victims of violence from their husbands, according to the Federal Ministry for Youth and Women's Affairs. In 1993, more than 6,000 extramarital rapes were reported in Germany. Figures have not been kept for rapes reported within a marriage.

Drunken-priest dead wrong at wedding ceremony

BUCHAREST (R) — An angry bride and groom beat up a drunken Romanian priest at the altar because he read out a funeral oration during their wedding ceremony. The Romanian News Agency (Romprea) said. Romprea said the priest, from the eastern village of Tisau, had previously been involved in a string of drunken brawls. The wedding foul-up proved the last straw for his long-suffering congregation, who finally broke their silence and talked of his scandalous behaviour to a reporter, the agency added.



Paris Mayor and rightist presidential candidate Jacques Chirac heads toward the podium as his bodyguards contain

the crowd gathered in Paris to hear him present his campaign platform entitled "France for all" (AFP photo)

Chirac puts presidential campaign in full swing

PARIS (R) — France's presidential campaign has hit full swing with Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac unveiling an ambitious programme against front-runner Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.

Opinion polls inject uncertainty into the race for the April 23-May 7 election to succeed Socialist President Francois Mitterrand.

Chirac, in a rousing speech to 10,000 cheering supporters Saturday, cast himself as a man of change against Mr. Balladur's "immobility."

The conservative ex-premier mixed left with right-wing ideas, making employment his top priority and proposing to cut payroll taxes to create jobs and raise wages to boost growth.

Hailed by his supporters as bold and far-sighted, derided by opponents as wishful

thinking, the programme signalled the start of an all-out offensive by Mr. Chirac, at his best in campaigning, against Mr. Balladur, a patrician ill-at-ease in electioneering.

The popular daily Le Parisien said Mr. Chirac wanted to appear as a leader and cast his fellow-Gaullist rival as a mere manager.

"France is going badly," Mr. Chirac said in a slap at Mr. Balladur, a former friend who likes to say that "France is going better" after the deepest recession since World War II.

Mr. Balladur has been consistently leading the race but opinion polls this week showed Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin closing in with Mr. Chirac remaining in third position.

A centrist candidate, either former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing or ex-premier Raymond Barre, could join the crowded field later this month, further splitting conservatives.

Besides Mr. Balladur and Mr. Chirac, far-rightist Jean-Marie Le Pen and anti-Maastricht campaigner Philippe De Villiers are vying for the conservative electorate.

All focused their fire on Mr. Chirac Saturday.

Mr. Balladur's backers said he was proposing the same medicine as the prime minister. Gaullist Parliamentarian Jacques Baumel called his proposals "demagoguery" that could not be financed.

Le Pen accused Mr. Chirac, twice a prime minister, of peddling hope and doubted he would do in the future what he failed to do in the past.

The Socialist Party derided

Mr. Chirac's proposals as "a pathetic cocktail" and the left-wing daily Liberation said his recipe was to "do much more for much cheaper."

Le Parisien said Mr. Chirac, by seeking to widen his appeal to the left, risked alienating conservatives and breaking up the right without winning over leftwingers.

"When you dig a bit, you find the traditional conservative themes," Socialist former Industry Minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn said of Mr. Chirac's programme.

Liberation said Mr. Chirac, who was twice beaten in presidential polls, had lost credibility by hesitating between being a Labourite and a Thatcherite.

"He realised this... and has found a solution: From now on, he will be both at the same time," it said.

Clinton: Arms sales is a valid policy instrument

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The Clinton administration announced approval Friday of a conventional arms sales policy upholding the traditional view that such transfers are a legitimate tool of foreign policy.

Arms control groups, which favour strong restraints in U.S. weapons sales abroad, immediately assailed the announcement.

President Bill Clinton's press secretary, Mike McCurry, said the policy "supports transfers that meet the continuing security needs of the United States, its friends and allies."

At the same time, it restraints arms transfers that "may be destabilising or threatening to regional peace and security," he said.

Mr. McCurry said the United States will "exercise unilateral restraint" in cases where "overriding national security or foreign policy interests require us to do so."

A White House fact sheet said that in determining the merits of a proposed arms sale, the "impact on U.S. industry and the defence industrial base" will be taken into account.

Sarah Walkling of the

Arms Control Association said she was upset that such criteria are now part of the administration's stated policy. "It's always been an unspoken part of policy," she said. "Now it's in writing, so it's a step backward."

The administration statement was released hours after the Commerce Department reported the United States suffered its worst merchandise trade deficit ever.

Commerce Secretary Ron Brown opposes arms sales restraint. "You can't allow the whole defence industry to evaporate," he said last summer.

Joel Johnson, a vice president at the Aerospace Industries Association, said, "in general we think this is a policy with which industry will be quite comfortable."

Mr. Johnson praised the administration as more supportive of American weapons sales abroad than any of its predecessors.

The policy announcement disappointed David Eisenberg, senior research analyst at the liberal Centre for Defence Information, who said, "we have seen the conclusion of the battle for the heart and mind of Clinton, and the

victor is America's private sector."

Eric Newsom, of the State Department's Political-Military Affairs Bureau, told reporters that U.S. arms sales policy will not be driven by commercial considerations.

"Our decisions will be made fundamentally on national security grounds," he said.

"Once a decision has been made on national security grounds to approve a particular transfer, then it is important that U.S. defence firms receive the support of the United States government in seeking to make that sale."

U.S., Poland sign defence pact

Meanwhile Defence Secretary William Perry and acting Polish Defence Minister Jerzy Milewski have signed an agreement pledging mutual protection of classified information and sensitive technology.

The accord signed Friday at the Pentagon marked a new phase in the defence relationship between the United States and Poland, a member of the Partnership for Peace.

"It says that we will protect each other's classified information and sensitive technology as our defence and military establishments work together," Mr. Perry said.

In a surprise move expected to anger Russia, the United States said Friday it has offered to sell advanced weapons such as F-16 fighters to Poland and at least nine other former Soviet Bloc states.

Washington has not sold high-tech arms to Eastern and Central European nations since the cold war ended, but has signed defence cooperation agreements with them and is counting closer ties through NATO's Partnership for Peace.

Mr. Perry said at a Pentagon session with Mr. Milewski that the offer of high-tech weaponry had been made to Poland and a number of Central European countries.

He was not more specific, but administration officials, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters the United States will also consider arms requests on "a case-by-case basis."

Observers here said U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord could bring a compromise proposal when he arrives here Wednesday on a four-day visit to iron out differences over implementation of the Geneva accord.

The agreement calls for the North to freeze its nuclear programme, suspected of developing weapons, in return for two light water reactors, economic assistance and a move toward better ties with Washington.

Seoul issues another warning over reactors deal

SEOUL (AFP) — A high-ranking Seoul official Saturday rejected the idea of using a non-South Korean private firm as an intermediary to break the deadlock over supplying nuclear reactors to North Korea.

Park Sang-Hoon, deputy director of the Korea Energy Development Organisation (KEDO) said Seoul insisted any contract must clearly specify that South Korea will be the reactor builder.

"It is quite disturbing to see press reports on such ideas (using private firms as

intermediaries)," said Mr. Park, the former head of the secretariat to the South's unification minister.

"There has been no suggestion from Washington that could entail any change in our position," Mr. Park told AFP in an interview Saturday.

He stressed that the KEDO, an emerging consortium made up of Japan, South Korea and still unnamed countries and designed to supply two light water reactors to North

Korea, must be the signatory of a contract with Pyongyang.

Mr. Park was commenting on press reports from Washington that the United States is considering a compromise under which South Korea builds the reactors but under a U.S. brand name to circumvent Pyongyang's aversion to dealing with the South.

The Washington Times quoted an official of U.S. Westinghouse as saying that the State Department had contacted the company,

probably over such an idea.

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Yeltsin orders disclosure of Soviet A-bomb history

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin Saturday ordered the publication of top-secret archive documents which will shed light on the controversial history of the former Soviet Union's early nuclear programme.

Mr. Yeltsin signed a decree ordering the preparation and publication of an official collection of archive papers dating up to 1954, said a statement issued by the Presidential Press Office.

The statement did not say when the publication would appear. Nor did it make clear whether all or only some of the documents would be disclosed.

"The decree aims at reconstructing an objective picture of the emergence of the national nuclear industry and

the history of the creation of nuclear weapons in the Soviet Union," the statement said.

The Soviet Union tested its first atomic bomb in 1949, four years after the United States. It was the first to test a hydrogen bomb in 1953.

It is widely believed in the West that the Soviet Union, keen to get a nuclear bomb as a counterbalance to the U.S. arsenal, simply stole the basic technology.

A couple from the United States, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, were convicted in 1951 of plotting to give the Soviets secret information about the U.S. atomic bomb. They were sent to the electric chair in 1953.

Over decades Kremlin authorities denied any allegations about the foreign origin of their atomic and hydrogen bombs — the pride of Soviet science and technology.

But the dispute over the issue re-emerged after a series of revelations by a former Soviet official.

Pavel Sudoplatov, a top officer in the Soviet KGB secret police, published a book in the United States last year alleging that four famous Western scientists had knowingly leaked nuclear secrets to Moscow.

Mr. Sudoplatov, who claims to have been in charge of spying on the U.S. atomic bomb project in the mid-1940s, said J. Robert Oppenheimer, Niels Bohr, Enrico Fermi and Leo Szilard had leaked the information through moles planted in the Manhattan Project that de-

veloped the A-bomb.

His claims were roundly dismissed by Western experts.

Even Russia's spy chiefs, breaking with longstanding practice, issued a denial the scientists handed over nuclear weapons data.

But later Russian National Archive Director Sergei Mironenko told the Moscow News weekly newspaper that secret Stalin-era archives supported Mr. Sudoplatov's allegations.

Mr. Mironenko said in a newspaper interview published last June that the information was contained in recently-opened archives of all secret police reports to dictator Josef Stalin from 1944 to 1953.

Bosnian troops punch through rebel lines in Bihac

Milosevic, Kozyrev work on Croatia, Bosnia recognition

SARAJEVO (R) — Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic huddled with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev Saturday to work out a response to pressure from big power mediators for Yugoslav recognition of Croatia and Bosnia.

The move would increase the isolation of separatist Serbs in the two former Yugoslav republics as mediators try to ward off the threat of renewed fighting this spring.

The recognition proposal is at the centre of a new initiative by the five big powers — the United States, Russia, France, Britain and Germany — which offers to lift all U.N. sanctions against ramp Yugoslavia in return.

Diplomats did not expect any quick, clear-cut response from Mr. Milosevic who would meet strong resistance from nationalist opponents in Belgrade if he tried to sacrifice the Bosnian and Croatian Serbs.

The Bosnian Serb leadership signalled Friday that it was considering a counterproposal to Mr. Milosevic, urging him to press ahead instead with the "unification of all Serbs."

Radovan Karadzic, president of the self-proclaimed Serb Republic in Bosnia, spoke on local television with Milan Martić, president of the rebel Republic of Serb Krajina (RSK) established on Croatian soil.

Mr. Kozyrev, whose government is Mr. Milosevic's closest international ally, was due to spend the weekend

discussing the conflict at a secluded hunting lodge in northern Serbia.

He stressed when he arrived in Belgrade Friday that he would not try to strong-arm Mr. Milosevic into recognition of Bosnia and Croatia and added:

"We will not rush, especially with the conclusions, now the contact group has a series of proposals at its disposal."

"None of them (the proposals) is final so far, but I would like to know the position of Serbian and Yugoslav officials to the proposals," he said.

Under the contact group plan Bosnia would be divided into roughly equal parts between the Bosnian Serb side and a Muslim-Croat Federation.

Croatia would be recognised within its pre-war borders, including the 30 per cent of its territory, the Krajina, now held by Croatian Serbs.

Mr. Milosevic has publicly given strong backing to the plan. Accepting the deal, however, means burying the nationalist goal of a greater Serbia and leaving himself open to charges of abandoning his ethnic kin in Bosnia and Krajina.

The Bosnian Serbs, holding 70 per cent of Bosnia, rejected the contact group proposals last August despite heavy pressure from Mr. Milosevic. He later punished the Bosnian Serb leadership with a military and economic embargo.

"Everybody has come to realise that the key to peace lies in Belgrade. We can no longer count on Karadzic or anybody else," Mr. Kozyrev told reporters.

"We have all lost illusions that we can count on any other forces except Serbia or Yugoslavia," he said.

"The reaction of the international community to the support of President Milosevic and the Serbian leaders, of Yugoslavia, for the peace plan proposed by the contact group has been inadequate and too weak," Mr. Kozyrev went on, calling for the lifting of sanctions against Belgrade.

Big powers fear that a new and bigger war could break out in spring when a current fragile truce in Bosnia is due to end and Croatia expels U.N. peacekeepers from buffer zones with its rebel Serb minority.

U.N. officials gave a pessimistic view Friday of fighting in Bosnia's Bihac enclave, saying it could spill into Croatia and trigger a wider conflict.

Despite a new year truce holding elsewhere in Bosnia, Muslim-led Bosnian government troops are defending Bihac in free-for-all fighting against two Serb armies, one from Bosnia and the other from Croatia, as well as local Muslim rebels.

Bosnian government forces have punched through Muslim rebel lines in the Bihac enclave, in the northwest of the country, pushing the enemy back by a couple of kilometres, the U.N. Protec-

tion Force (UNPROFOR) said Saturday.

The government advance along part of the frontline, near the village of Podzvid, east of Velika Kladusa, in the north of the pocket, was one of several actions which, over the past days, has involved gains and losses by both sides, UNPROFOR spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward said.

A total of 455 heavy weapon detonations were monitored in the area between Friday 8 a.m. and Saturday 8 a.m., nearly half of them after 4 p.m. Saturday, UNPROFOR said.

Velika Kladusa itself is held by Muslim rebel leader Fikret Abdic and his Serb allies from the Krajina region of neighbouring Croatia, who have been helping him notably with artillery support.

Neither Abdic, nor the Krajina Serbs are party to a four-month nationwide truce which came into force at the beginning of the year in Bosnia.

Meanwhile, Mr. Abdic's forces Saturday prevented a convoy sent from Zagreb by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with 100 tonnes of food for government-held territory in Bihac enclave from passing beyond Velika Kladusa.

Kris Janowski, spokesman for the UNHCR here, said the food was to be unloaded at a U.N. Bangladeshi camp in Velika Kladusa where it would be kept until it could be transported further south. The trucks would return to Zagreb.

British and Irish ministers said on Saturday they had nearly completed complex new Northern Ireland peace proposals which the province's main political party rejects outright.

"There are no significant matters of substance between us at this stage," Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring said after almost five hours' of talks with British Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew.

The two ministers said officials would be in contact over the weekend about the so-called framework document they have been drafting for two years and expected to put the draft to their respective governments for approval next week.

Mr. Spring said no further meetings between the two ministers were planned and "we expect to be in a position to put it to our governments next week."

Mr. Mayhew hinted that the only matters to be settled were ones of language and presentation. "If you are looking for some crisis, there is none," he said.

But Northern Ireland's Protestant unionist politicians reiterated at the weekend that they would not take part in any all-party talks on the document because they fear it will pandering to their nationalist foes who seek the unification of Ireland.

Hardline Protestant leader Ian Paisley said his Democratic Unionist Party would not discuss the document and he expected the bigger Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) to do likewise.

"We will not be at any table at which the framework document is set out as part of an agenda," Mr. Paisley told BBC Radio.

Neither Mr. Spring nor Mr. Mayhew would be drawn into speculation about a possible boycott by unionists, who want Northern Ireland to stay British and fear that the framework document

threatens their cherished British sovereignty.

The document is known to propose that Britain and Ireland drop rival constitutional claims to Northern Ireland to put the onus on the 60 per cent Protestant majority and Catholic minority to work out a new future in peace.

It will also propose setting up cross-border institutions to manage economic affairs but unionists fear this will propel them into Dublin's orbit and eventually erode their Britishness.

British and Irish leaders have tried to blunt the anger of unionists by saying that the document is only a discussion paper that will require approval by referendum and by government.

Mr. Mayhew said there had been "a lot of understandable speculation and anxiety" about the document, the fruit of more than two years complex Anglo-Irish negotiation.

But he appealed to unionists, who have threatened to progress in drafting a policy paper setting out how Eastern Europe can adapt to the EU market.

Poland and Hungary have already applied to join the EU, the Czech Republic plans to apply this year and senior officials in Slovakia and Romania predicted this week that they could also seek memberships as early as June.

Although the EU has made no promises on when it might open its doors to Eastern Europe, it has begun the long process of thinking about how and when they can be admitted and what needs to be done.

The policy paper is expected to appear in May in time for discussion by EU leaders at their Cannes summit on June 26-27.

The three-day conference gathered some 160 scientists and policy-makers from the Asia-Pacific region to formulate a common stand ahead of an international conference in Berlin starting March 28, the First Conference of Parties of the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Ms. Bhutto said developed nations produced less than a quarter of the global greenhouse gas emissions, but were "paying a disproportionate price for the excess" of the industrialised countries of Europe and the Americas.

Ms. Bhutto said any agreement regulating the emission of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere — which was proposed during the 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, known as the Earth Summit — must not be used to stall the growth of developing countries, pointing out that many of these emerging economies are from Asia.

East Europe lacks infrastructure to join EU

BRUSSELS (R) — Eastern European countries, queuing eagerly to become members of the European Union, lack the basic institutions and infrastructure to join the EU's border-free market, the European Commission says.

"In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe these institutional infrastructures are often lacking," an internal document, written by commission officials re-

sponsible for external policy and internal trade, says.

The document, obtained by Reuters, says efforts by the Eastern European countries to adopt EU rules "would be an empty exercise if the organisational and institutional structures which must underpin the measures are absent."

The note is intended to brief the 20 commissioners on progress in drafting a policy paper setting out how Eastern Europe can adapt to the EU market.

Poland and Hungary have already applied to join the EU, the Czech Republic plans to apply this year and senior officials in Slovakia and Romania predicted this week that they could also seek memberships as early as June.

Pakistan vows to get tough with militants

MANILA (Agencies) — Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, pledging to help in fighting against international terrorism, said Saturday she would not allow her country to be used as a sanctuary for extremists.

She said the government would soon crack down on militants at home.

"We can help reduce international terrorism by cooperating closely with other countries vis-a-vis terrorists who are wanted," Ms. Bhutto said in a news conference before returning home from a two-day visit to Manila.

She said the recent arrest in Islamabad of Ramzi Ahmad Yousef, a top suspect in the 1993 bombing of the U.S. World Trade Centre in New York, was proof of her government's resolve to help curb terrorism.

Mr. Yousef, who was also linked to an alleged plot to blow up U.S. airlines operating in the Asia-Pacific region, was extradited to the United States last week where he now faces trial.

Ms. Bhutto said Mr. Yousef was not a Pakistani national.

On other wanted extremists in Pakistan, she said: "We will certainly look for them rather than provide them refuge."

"Within Pakistan itself, we are very keen to start regulating different institutions so that we can identify where militancy springs from," Ms. Bhutto said.

Ms. Bhutto Saturday slammed Western countries for global environmental pollution and said efforts to solve the problem should not sacrifice the growth of developing nations.

In a keynote address to the Asia-Pacific Conference on Climate Change, Ms. Bhutto said that while developing nations were not "blameless," rich countries should do the bulk of the work in cleaning up the environment in their own backyards and through international cooperation.

"It would only be fair that those who have primarily polluted the environment take on a major responsibility for cleaning it up," she said and urged developed nations to "apply their successful technologies to our noxious problems."

"We cannot allow the developed world's century-long abuse of our common environment to be the excuse for another century of economic abuse and social inequity," she said.

"Often with the natural resources ripped from their colonial conquests, the developed world has rapidly in-

dustrialised without plan or thought of consequence to the environmental impact of their own action," she told the conference.

The three-day conference gathered some 160 scientists and policy-makers from the Asia-Pacific region to formulate a common stand ahead of an international conference in Berlin starting March 28, the First Conference of Parties of the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Ms. Bhutto said developed nations produced less than a quarter of the global greenhouse gas emissions, but were "paying a disproportionate price for the excess" of the industrialised countries of Europe and the Americas.

Ms. Bhutto said any agreement regulating the emission of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere — which was proposed during the 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, known as the Earth Summit — must not be used to stall the growth of developing countries, pointing out that many of these emerging economies are from Asia.

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Guarding against slide

U.S. SECRETARY of State Warren Christopher may have succeeded in containing the fallout from the recent call by two New York Senators — Democrat Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Republican Alfonse D'Amato — for the transfer of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, when he cautioned Friday against any precipitous action on the city that might interfere with the peace process. But in reality, this latest stance by the Clinton administration would not allay completely Arab fears that a U.S. decision to locate its embassy in Jerusalem may be in the cards somewhere along the line.

For starters, President Bill Clinton went on record as favouring such a transfer when he told Jewish leaders as far back as 1992 that he believed in the principle of moving the embassy to Jerusalem and that what was holding him back on making the necessary decision was the fear that the step would interfere with the peace process. No wonder then that Christopher's assurances to a House of Representatives sub-committee Friday on Jerusalem fell short of an iron-clad commitment against such a move some time in the future. The secretary of state indicated to the House of Representatives that only for the time being will the U.S. do nothing that would disrupt the delicate peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians but he would not rule out such a posture once these negotiations are concluded.

We all know the implications of any possible erosion in Washington's position on East Jerusalem on the regional and international levels. One wrong move by the U.S. and the whole peace effort could collapse. That is why the Arab side and the international community should be wary of any shift in U.S. intentions on this most sensitive issue. Even though the final status of Jerusalem, which effectively means the final status of East Jerusalem, would be decided in the final stages of the Israel-Palestinian talks, the Arab side must prepare the groundwork for this most difficult round of negotiations as of now and not leave it only to the Palestinian side to cope with it.

The stakes in Jerusalem are formidable for the Arab, Muslim and Christian worlds. Unless there is a united front from all these quarters, the Palestinian side could find itself in too weak a position to restore what is rightfully an Arab right.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL from occupied Jordanian territories was a step in the right direction, but Israel has a long way to go in order to convince the Arab masses that it is truly and sincerely oriented towards a comprehensive peace, said Ahmad Arafat, a writer in Al Ra'i daily on Saturday. The Arabs expect Israel to withdraw its forces from southern Lebanon and the Syrian Golan Heights, hope to see the thousands of Arab detainees freed, the Oslo and Cairo agreements implemented in full and Israel's nuclear programmes eliminated, said the writer. There can be no peace if Israel continues to stockpile mass destruction weapons that threaten the existence of the Arab World's present and future, said the writer. By refusing to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and other international peace and withdrawal from Arab lands, and by pursuing oppressive measures against the Palestinians, said the writer, Israel is proving to the world that it is not interested in peace, stability and security in the Middle East.

A WRITER in Al-Dustour expressed regret that successive governments in Jordan have failed to deal effectively with the problems of unemployment and poverty. Abdullah Al-Khatib said that while officials continue to give statements about plans to deal with these chronic issues, poverty and unemployment tend to increase at serious levels. In my view, said the writer, the successive governments keep postponing any serious action to deal with the situation and hope that by increasing the allocations for the National Aid Fund, which distributes limited financial aid to the poor, they can contain the problems. He said that the government is doing nothing to stem the rate in population growth, which now stands at 3.6 per cent annually and continues to issue licences to private universities and community colleges that turn out job-seekers and join the army of the unemployed. The many seminars, lectures and statements about plans and allocations for the National Aid Fund have come to naught, said the writer.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

The economic recession: What are the causes?

By Dr. Fahed Fawzi

THE JORDANIAN public complains of an economic recession. The recession started at mid-1993, following the Oslo accord over Gaza and Jericho, and gained momentum in 1994 in a climate of uncertainty which accompanied the feeling that some sort of peace is coming soon, but no one knew at what terms.

Observers are looking for something to place the responsibility for the recession on. To recognise the "culprit" will obviously help in formulating the best solution to end this recession.

The most frequently pointed out reasons are the bad relations with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), and the tight monetary policy adopted by the Central Bank, which drew from the market a substantial part of the liquidity through its certificates of deposit (CDs), and raised interest rates by three percentage points, which increased the cost of funds, and reduced demand on credit, consumption and investment.

Bad relations with the PNA could not have been the reason behind the recession. The recent friendly visit paid by PNA President Yasser Arafat to Amman, and the signing of seven agreements for cooperation in economic, cultural, banking, monetary and administrative affairs, failed to do the trick, and perhaps worsened the situation, as indicated by the behaviour of prices in Amman stock exchange.

Before we evaluate the effects of the monetary policy, it is necessary to examine the so-called recession and determine its nature, extent and indicators.

Recession advocates point out the lower prices of shares in the Amman stock exchange and the lower volume of trade activities in the commodity market. Most of the complaints are raised by traders whose sales are said to be way below their expectations, and speculators whose

portfolios of shares lost value compared to the peak achieved in mid-1993.

As far as share prices are concerned, we find that current average yield is as low as 2 per cent, compared to a normal return of 4 per cent, and that the price multiple is over 20 times compared to a normal price earning ratio of 15.

Such ratios suggest that the current share prices are on the high side. Any important rise in the share price index will worsen the discrepancy by raising the multiple above its already high level and lowering the yield below its already low level. The fact that prices of shares soared for two years until mid-1993 does not mean that the sharp rise must be followed by another rise. The market needs a period of time to absorb the 46 per cent jump which took place during the 1991-1993 period. Further improvement in share prices should wait for a real improvement of companies' profitability at some time in the future.

The complaints of traders may be justified, but they stem from the out-of-proportion increase in their numbers. The cake is being distributed among many more shopkeepers. For example, shops in Wafa Al Tel Street more than doubled, the share of each shopkeeper must drop even if overall sales were growing. The two pharmacies in the street in 1990 become 10 in 1994. It is only natural that sales of each pharmacy must decline, which does not necessarily mean that people are consuming less medicine.

Aside from shares and trade, all other indicators reflect a healthy economy. Exports grew in 1994 by 20 per cent, imports maintained the same high level, balance of trade improved, the budget posted a surplus, capital formation rose, subscriptions in new shares in the primary market set a record, unemployment declined by three percentage points, the JD maintained its stability, foreign exchange reserves of the Central Bank are stronger, and, finally, the

economy achieved a high growth rate in a climate of low inflation.

Those who blame the monetary policy claim that the Central Bank suffocated the market by sucking liquidity from the banks. It is true that the Central Bank attracted JD 278 million through the sale of its CDs, but domestic liquidity rose in 1994 by JD 359.7 million, of which JD 276.6 million are in local currency. This amounts to a net increase in liquidity of 8 per cent.

Interest rate on the JD rose to around 8.5 per cent in response to an international trend. The Central Bank cannot afford not to respond to higher interest rate on other currencies, especially the dollar, because otherwise capital flight may follow. The higher interest rate triggered by the bank influenced interest payable on deposits but hardly altered the interest rate on credit. The margin between interest payable and interest receivable narrowed due to more competition among banks. Depositors benefited but borrowers did not suffer.

It was claimed that bank credit is too tight, but the statistics show that debt of the private sector to banks increased in 1994 by a staggering amount of JD 453.7 million, a growth of 19.6 per cent, which is too high and, if anything, should be reduced, not increased.

Money supply, which increased by 9.3 per cent in 1993, increased by a further 10.1 per cent in 1994, which is more than sufficient to accommodate growth. Had the Central Bank allowed more liquidity, the result would be inflation and higher cost of living, which would eat up growth.

It is quite easy to activate the market by artificial means through expansionary policies. But this can create a false prosperity in the short run, followed by a set-back, just like drinking alcohol, which can cause a pleasant feeling for the moment, followed by a bangover.

The roots of the Palestinian economic crisis

By Emma Murphy

AFTER the signing of the Oslo accords in September 1993, there was born a consensus among all parties concerned that only a rapid improvement in the economic situation of the occupied territories could sustain popular Palestinian support for the deal. It was assumed that if external parties supplied the \$2.4bn promised at the World Bank donors' conference in October 1993, then the ground would be set for Israel and the PLO to work out the details of new economic relations to replace those which had previously been imposed by Israel and which had led to the deliberate underdevelopment of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A Protocol on Economic Relations was indeed signed in Paris in April 1994, and was heralded as the first step in a joint effort to develop the full potential of the Palestinian economy. Like the pledges of rapid donor aid, however, the new economic relationship has proved to be full of false promise and to be based on similar failures to address the root cause of economic crisis in the territories.

With Palestinian living standards still falling and with insufficient finance coming in, prospects for sustainable economic development are dim. International donors and Palestinian leaders may beat their breasts about the variety of possible reasons, but in essence they come down to just two: the misconception that economic and political development can run on parallel but essentially separate tracks, and the failure of the international community to hold Israel to its legal, economic and moral commitments.

Committed to defend Israeli interests

At a most basic level, without the political concessions necessary from Israel to make the Palestine National Authority (PNA) a truly national, representative and empowered body, the Palestinians have been left to negotiate an economic arrangement from a position in which they have simply no cards to play. The Protocol on Economic Relations denies the PNA competence to determine its own economic strategy and policy, committing it first and foremost to defending Israeli economic interests through the terms of the customs union. This allows Israel to determine which goods the Palestinians may import from third countries, preventing the Palestinian economy from developing a role as transit agent for products that are more competitive than Israel's own and maintaining a Palestinian market for Israeli products.

A high level of purchase tax has been imposed on the Palestinians, increasing the cost of their own products for both export and

domestic consumption. Israeli import standards have been imposed on the new authority, again preventing cheap imports that may be more competitive than Israeli products. The PNA has accepted quotas on the sale of certain poultry, dairy and agricultural produce to Israel. While these will be phased out by 1998, it is already becoming clear that Israel is preparing to import these goods from elsewhere, rather than from the West Bank and Gaza.

The concessions from Israel are in reality minor. While Palestinians are free to export produce to Israel (with the exception of the goods mentioned above), they have relatively little to offer in the absence of significant domestic industry and in view of the restrictions on their ability to act as a conduit for third-party finished goods. They can determine customs duties and taxes only for goods essential to their economic development programme (such as capital equipment and wood) and on vehicle imports. Fuel prices are subject to an Israeli condition that they should not be more than 15 per cent less than those in Israel itself to protect the domestic energy market. No allowances have been made for the high levels of government subsidy of Israeli production, nor has the vital issue of the return of Palestinian resources (such as land, labour and mineral deposits) been addressed.

The vital clause that commits Israel to refraining from placing obstacles in the way of the free movement of Palestinian labour has already been invalidated by both the closures imposed by Israel and its importing of over 30,000 foreign labourers from Eastern Europe and the Far East since March. Moreover, the Israeli government has subsidised (at the rate of \$10 per day) Israeli workers who take jobs formerly performed by Palestinians. Prime Minister Rabin explicitly stated on Israel Radio on April 10 that the intention is to break the dependence on and replace Palestinian cheap labour. Yet with the Palestinian labour force growing by up to 15,000 a year, access to the Israeli labour market is critically important.

Finally, in the financial realm, the Palestinians were given the ability to raise revenues through taxes and to administer budget for its expenditure. The potential tax base, however, is unlikely to be sufficient to provide the necessary health, education, welfare, investment and administrative services that are needed for a great many years. (It should be remembered that this is due, not least, to the results of Israeli over-taxing for nearly 30 years, none of the fruits of which are to be returned). The Palestinians are allowed sufficient financial freedom to encourage

and facilitate the establishment of financial institutions to provide investment credit and banking services, but they are denied the right to issue a currency, and operate a central bank to freely determine indirect taxes. Israel has managed to pass the burden of responsibility for investment to the PNA and the private sector and gained the legitimacy and access to Palestinian savings that it has always sought for its own financial institutions to operate profitably in the territories. These institutions, notably Bank Leumi, are now able to tap into the increased financial flows which come from a link with Jordanian, Saudi, Egyptian and Palestinian capital.

In effect, the terms of the Paris protocol were determined by Israel. In return for conceding almost the entire cost of occupation (including service provision) but very little by way of real power or decision-making, Israel has legitimised a revamped version of the old economic relations. This time, Palestinian economic growth is encouraged but more to revitalise the purchasing power of a still dependent and controlled economy than to allow sustainable, genuine and autonomous development.

At the level of donor aid, donors are understandably reluctant to transfer funds without proper accountability on the part of the PNA. Yet the authority itself, as long as democratic, constitutional elections are not the foundation of its existence, is an essentially unaccountable body. Democratically elected political institutions are by definition accountable to their electorate and must be financially largely transparent. Donors have expected the PNA to act as a politically developed national institution even as the Israelis have denied it the means to become such a body. The Israeli government offers only a marginal, municipal form of elections that would make the PNA a localised administrative servicing agency rather than a guarantor of political and human rights. If donors are truly interested in economic development, then it is in their interests to ensure that donated aid is not simply used to prop up an unaccountable, un-elected and undeveloped mini-regime by either Mr. Arafat (which they noticeably worry about) or Israel (which they do not).

The necessity for political development

The international donor community has failed to understand that, unless the arrangements forced on the Palestinians in Paris are substantially altered, no amount of project aid will stimulate economic development in the occupied territories. Without political pressure on Israel to make meaningful rather than cosmetic economic

concessions, the Palestinians will be unable to generate business confidence or to attract investment. The final status talks will be critical in this regard. If private Palestinian diaspora capital is to be a major pillar of the new economy, then that capital must have confidence that the resources of Palestine (its land, water and refugee labour) and its commercial capital city will be returned. Moreover, there must be evidence that Palestinian investment will benefit a Palestinian economy, not simply be siphoned off by the remodelled but basically familiar impositions of Israel.

So far, the evidence has been that, as Israel dictates the economic terms of peace, so it is reaping the economic rewards. The Cairo agreement absolves it of any need to recompense the Palestinians for the 27 years of economic destruction; unbelievably the PNA has been made to take upon itself the responsibility of paying compensation to parties aggrieved by Israeli actions in the occupied territories since 1967.

Instead, Israel has launched a campaign for new and better trading terms with Europe, the dismantling of the Arab boycott and the development of regional cooperation — all of which appear to be within its grasp. With all past sins apparently forgiven and forgotten, no country seeks to make Israel accountable for its own renegeing on the terms and spirit of Oslo, as the PNA is held so acutely accountable. Even the illegal construction of 11,000 new housing units in occupied territory, pre-empting the final status talks and contrary to its commitments, does not earn Israel even a minor rebuke.

It is a fundamental flaw in the current peace process that "economic development" has come to mean simply a temporary improvement in living standards that will sustain a one-sided and unjust peace agreement for the convenience of all parties except the Palestinians themselves.

Genuine, sustainable economic development requires the political development and empowerment of the Palestine National Authority, a concession which Israel is still unwilling to make. The international community, by lending its weight to the Palestinian efforts to change Israeli policy, can do more to achieve real progress at both political and economic levels than through all its censure of the Palestinian leaderships or its hand-wringing over the poverty and suffering of the Palestinian people.

Emma Murphy is a research fellow at Durham University. The article is reprinted from Middle East International.

Europeans worry over U.S. vote on foreign policy

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuters

LONDON — With transatlantic ties already under strain, European allies are worried by growing signs that the United States could ditch its self-appointed role as benevolent global superpower in favour of more selfish aims.

A resolution passed on Thursday by the U.S. House of Representatives would cut or even eliminate contributions to U.N. peacekeeping, limit presidential powers in foreign defence policy and push NATO towards early expansion.

It is unlikely to become law since President Bill Clinton is expected to veto the Republican-backed bill, which has yet to pass the Senate, if necessary.

But France sharply criticised the move. European diplomats said the vote was a worrying indication of what could become U.S. policy if the Republicans, who won control of the Congress in elections last year, win the presidential elections in 1996.

"Taking aim at the U.N.... and denying it the means to do its job is seriously derailing what little order exists in the world today," French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe told a news conference.

"I think it's a real shame and a real step backwards for international law and world organisation," one diplomat in a major European capital said of the vote. "It was a sign of things to come and there is a lot of concern. It doesn't mean the United States will become isolationist — just that it will become a lot more selfish and less ready to compromise with allies and international institutions."

The vote marked the first major occasion that Congress has flexed its muscles on foreign policy since it took office at the start of this year. Other proposals

to slash foreign aid and international lending are also under discussion.

The United States has been committed to working through international organisations and alliances since the end of World War II 50 years ago, despite much grumbling and while reserving the right to take unilateral action in defence of its interests.

The Clinton administration has reaffirmed those commitments and, faced with a Congress hostile to current foreign policy, is worried that the United States may become a crippled superpower.

Mr. Clinton has called the bill approved by the House on Thursday an "unacceptable assault on his executive authority." U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Defence Secretary William Perry lined up on Thursday to condemn it.

Mr. Christopher said it was "a threat to this and every future president's authority to protect the security of the United States."

Diplomats say the bill, which has yet to pass the Senate, would almost certainly encourage other countries to follow the U.S. lead and cut funding for badly needed U.N. peacekeeping operations around the world.

The bill pushes for rapid NATO expansion to Eastern Europe, something Washington's partners in the alliance are not ready to accept at a time when relations with Russia are at a very delicate stage.

It is already a critical time in transatlantic relations, with the European security picture confused and unstable.

The United States has slashed its troop strength in Europe following the end of the cold war and has recently been involved in bitter arguments with its allies over Bosnia and trade.

Russia's future is uncertain after the Chechnya debacle.

LETTERS

Letters must be written

To the Editor:

IN HIS letter to the editor, "Why people write letters," (Jordan Times, Feb. 15), Husam Deranieh indicated that Jordanians should not write to the Jordan Times about certain issues. But why shouldn't they? After all, the Jordan Times, and I quote "welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle." Furthermore, it is not only to show others that they can write in English and to have their names published that people write. One would be surprised as to how many Jordanians in general, whether Jordan University students, government public relation officers, or others, actually read and are genuinely interested in the Jordan Times.

If Mr. Deranieh is so concerned about giving the wrong impression to the foreign guests about our country, he should start by encouraging other fellow Jordanians to relay different aspects of our Jordanian community, rather than asking that we hide the truth from our foreign guests. By exposing different aspects of our society, foreigners will understand us more and must be better prepared to make friends with us.

Hiba Dajani,
Amman.

Feature

In search

PolyGram has a whose enthusiasm
Roger Trapp

NO MATTER what the management thinkers say about the successful businesses of the future being dependent on the knowledge of their employees, creativity is a problem for many companies. They say they value it, yet they attempt to package it and preserve it like some rare jewel in an obscure corner of the organisation rather than spreading it around.

Very few go as far as PolyGram, the international entertainment company, and state that "creativity is the business." Of course, your company that controls the company that records such renowned labels as A&M, Island, Motown, Verve and Decca is in a creative business. But it is also a large corporation — one all over the world — and the two do not always go hand in hand — even when the company concerned is operating in a field requiring flair and inspiration.

One of the ways in which PolyGram deals with this problem is to split itself into small units. For this reason, the labels it owns are not just imprints designed to play on feelings of nostalgia, they are separate companies within the larger organisation, each with its own style and approach. As Gareth Jones, senior vice-president responsible for human resources at PolyGram, says: "We're forever fighting the size effect by creating small labels. Often a label might fail, but it might just be the one that signs the next U2."

The company is so convinced of the success of this policy — which is carried out to a certain degree in other conglomerates, with Virgin said to act independently within EMI, for instance — that it is imitating

PNA condemns

(Continued from page 1)

in real danger," it said, calling on the "international community... to act immediately to save the peace talks."

Mr. Rabin said this week that Israel has recently detained some 2,500 Palestinians on suspicion of involvement with the militants, bringing the number of detainees near 6,000.

According to the Sept. 13, 1993 Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord, Israel was to have withdrawn troops from Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank last summer. The agreement called for general elections afterwards in the West Bank and Gaza.

Israel blames the delays on concern for the safety of Jewish settlers on the West Bank in the wake of the attacks, and wants Mr. Arafat to do more to reign in the militants. But Mr. Arafat faces criticism

U.S. to speed up debate

(Continued from page 1)

to sign the treaty can take place in several forms," he told JTV.

"This might take place by proposing to extend the treaty

Taliban demand

(Continued from page 1)

mic law across the country. They are now believed to control one third of Afghan territory.

The U.N. envoy said that although the Taliban have renounced their support for the U.N. peace process, they still refuse to join the so-called "mechanism" referring to the transfer of power from Mr. Rabbani, whose two-year term expired last December.

"I am not keen to have the mechanism, but I want them to be in contact with the mechanism," observed Mr. Mesini.

But he said that Mr. Rabbani was insisting on the direct participation of the Taliban in this mechanism.

Roger Trapp

Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

JIC chief expects JD 150m of foreign investment this year

☆☆ Mohammad Batayneh, director-general of the Jordan Investment Corporation (JIC), said that 15 foreign companies had contacted the corporation to invest in existing and new industrial projects. He said one company requested to buy 35 per cent stake in the cement factories while other companies offered to buy a 15 per cent equity in the potash plant. Mr. Batayneh noted that foreign companies had made JD 2 million of deals in the potash firm last year. The JIC chief expects foreign investment to jump to JD150 million at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) this year. Foreign investment did not exceed JD 4.2 million last year out of JD 150 million approved by the government because of administrative bottlenecks and bureaucratic delays. Mr. Batayneh said, He said the applications to invest at the AFM last year amounted to JD 90 million but, with increased enquiries, the volume will definitely rise to JD 150 million this year (Al Aswaq).

☆☆ The Arab Orient Company for Financial and Economic Investments, set up as a public shareholding company on Jan. 22, 1995, is floating 2.5 million shares (at JD 1 per share) for public subscription. The company, registered as a holding company with a JD 10 million capital, aims at establishing and/or managing affiliated companies as well as investing in other firms and acquiring other interests. Main founders of the company are: The Social Security Corporation (JD 500,000), the Arab Bank (JD 500,000), the Housing Bank (JD 500,000), the Cairo Amman Bank (JD 500,000), Abu Mohammad Hussein Abdul Haj (JD 350,000), Abdul Khaled Mohammad Hussein Abdul Haj (JD 300,000), Rabb Al Masri (JD 300,000), Khalil Al Tahouni (JD 250,000), Kamal Al Shaer (JD 250,000), Abdul Mohsen Al Qattan (JD 250,000), Arab Jordan Investment Bank (JD 200,000), and A Ma'mouniyeh Commercial Establishment (JD 200,000). The number of founders stands at 95 including those mentioned (Al Ra'i).

☆☆ According to Khaldoun Abu Hassan, president of the Amman Chamber of Industry, the industrial sector employs about 110,000 workers who earn a total of around JD 237 million a year. Direct and indirect taxes and fees paid by the industrial sector to state coffers are estimated at JD 314 million in 1994. Mr. Abu Hassan said that during the past four years a total of 17,500 new companies entered the private sector bringing in JD 900 million in capital and creating 35,000 employment opportunities. The firms operating at Sahab Industrial Estate have a combined capital of JD 331 million and employ 12,421 workers. As such, it can be said that every JD 30,000 investment provides one job opportunity (Al Ra'i).

☆☆ The Arab Bridge Maritime company (ABMC), owned by the governments of Jordan, Egypt and Iraq, made a \$10.6 million profit last year. The profit, which surpasses the \$6 million capital of the company, will be distributed equally between the three countries. ABMC General Manager Mohammad Al Dalabeh said the company decided to construct buildings in Aqaba at a cost of JD 1 million with completion expected next February. The company transported a record 1.3 million passengers last year (Al Dustour).

Rubber agreement praised as good commodity pact

GENEVA (R) — A new global rubber pact reached in 10 days of negotiations in Geneva showed the industry believed in the agreement's price-stabilising function, speakers have told the final assembly.

"At a time that the concept of market stabilisation has lost favour with governments, this approach remains valid and beneficial," John Cuddy, the officer in charge of commodities at the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), said.

UNCTAD sponsored the 39-nation meeting which drew up the successor pact to two previous world rubber deals. These have broadly achieved market stabilisation over the past 14 years.

The latest pact is the world's only remaining commodity agreement. Cocoa and coffee agreements no longer influence prices as their approach became unfashionable in the 1980s but they still provide their industries with a discussion forum.

Some analysts believe the upswing in commodities prices in 1994 may yet again reinforce the need to bridge the gap in raw materials industries between producers and consumers.

Analysts said rubber consumers had insisted on a Geneva agreement because price rallies to their highest levels since the Korean war had left them worried about long-term trends.

Mr. Cuddy said the new pact would have "positive effects directly and indirectly on consumers and producers of natural rubber worldwide."

Direct stabilisation would be achieved through buffer stock operations by the International Natural Rubber Organisation which operates the agreements, he said.

Indirectly, the pact would promote confidence among growers that they could expect reasonable returns and it would reassure manufacturers of a certain buying price stability.

"Although market prices are exceptionally high, experience shows they can fall as fast as they have risen," Mr. Cuddy said.

Chairman Peter Lai said the conclusion of the pact showed the delegates, representing more than 90 per cent of the world rubber industry, had faith in the agreement.

He urged them to ratify the draft agreement as soon as possible. It may enter into force in late 1996 as soon as around 75 per cent of world exporters and importers have signed it.

The current pact expires at the end of 1995 and the market will be left to its own devices in the interim period.

European Union spokesman Daniel Le Gargasson said the deal illustrated that the relationship between rubber producers and consumers was at its best in years.

"The EU will do its utmost to ratify this package as soon as possible and trust others will do likewise," he said.

Analysts predict \$1 oil price rise by June

LONDON (R) — World oil prices are likely to rise by at least a dollar a barrel by June despite an exceptionally mild northern winter which has kept a cap on them so far this year, oil analysts and traders say.

Global economic growth, stable, not higher, output from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and low stocks should buoy prices ahead of the summer driving season.

"Prices will rise in the second quarter by about \$1.30 (a barrel) over the average for the first quarter," said economist Leo Drollas of the Centre for Global Energy Studies (CGES).

"But the rise will be less than last year when prices rocketed by an average of \$2 a barrel in the second quarter," Mr. Drollas said.

Traditionally oil prices take a dip during March, April and May as consumption dips after the peak-demand winter season as refiners begin their spring maintenance closures which cut crude oil needs. But over the past three years price dips have come earlier in the first quarter as the market gets ahead of itself.

"The pattern was that prices in the second quarter weakened as physical demand weakened and refiners went into turnaround," said Fergus Macleod, analyst at Natwest Securities. "But in the last three years prices have bottomed earlier as people have anticipated spring."

North Sea Brent Blend crude oil, the international benchmark, has traded in a range between \$16.05 and \$17.50 a barrel so far this year, a sharp improvement on a year ago when prices hit a five-year low of \$12.90.

Robust economic growth should help boost world oil demand year on year by about one million b/d, analysts say.

According to latest projections from the International Energy Agency global oil demand in 1995 will rise to 69.2 million b/d compared with 68.2 million b/d in 1994.

OECD and non-OECD demand in the second quarter are forecast to increase by 600,000 b/d each year-on-year to 39.3 million b/d and 28.1 million b/d, respectively.

But stock levels for crude oil and refined products are seen as the key to a second-quarter price rise, analysts say.

"Most of the demand growth this year will come in the second quarter from a strong stockbuild component of about 1.6 million b/d," said the CGES's Drollas.

Brimming inventories for heating fuel are countered by low stocks of U.S. crude oil and other petroleum products, which are down four per cent year-on-year, according to weekly statistics from the American Petroleum Institute.

"The focus is on gasoline. It is the motor of (crude) demand and refiner profitability in the spring and summer," said Natwest's Macleod. "Directional movement (of oil prices) is upwards through until the late summer," he said.

Natwest Securities forecasts Brent crude oil to reach \$19 before the end of the year.

Spring maintenance at European refineries will take out about 23 per cent of Europe's near 12 million b/d of refining capacity in the second quarter.

But analyst Mehdi Varzi at Kleinwort Benson Research says the major factor to any price rise will be current cuts in refinery processing rates and a recovery in refining margins.

But low stocks do not necessarily mean much higher prices.

"The question is how strong and how sustainable the recovery will be. Low stocks by themselves do not mean higher crude prices," Mr. Varzi said.

"Every year refiners try to run inventories down to lower minimum prudent levels. It's all part of trying to be more efficient and increase working capital."

Report dismissed that GCC will not participate in M.E. development bank

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The State Department acting spokesman Christine Shelly on Friday dismissed a New York Times report that suggested rather strongly that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has chosen not to participate in the creation of the Middle East regional development bank.

"It does not reflect what our understanding of the position of the parties is," Ms. Shelly said. "It's still our view that there is a strong and growing regional consensus for a Middle East development bank."

"There has been agreement as well that we should explore the details of how best to structure a bank and to make it most effective," she said.

Some of the Gulf countries have raised questions about the proposed bank.

"They have raised them before, so that's not anything new. But certainly as a bottom line, it's still very much our understanding that they're open to this idea," Ms. Shelly said.

IATA: World airlines on course for profit

GENEVA (R) — World airlines remain on course to post their first profit in five years after reporting healthy gains in passenger and freight traffic for 1994, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has said.

The organisation said passenger traffic on international scheduled services rose eight per cent for the year, outstripping the capacity increase by three percentage points.

The passenger load factor for the year was 68 per cent, two points up on the 1993 figure.

Freight traffic showed a 14 per cent increase.

Collective profitability figures for IATA's 229 member airlines are not due until April, but IATA's public relations director William Gaillard said a 1994 net profit of around \$1 billion was on the cards.

IATA airlines have not reported a net profit on international scheduled services since 1989. From 1990 to 1993, the recession years, losses totalled \$15.6 billion.

Mr. Gaillard said a combination of two factors could pull them out of the red: Economic upturn and widespread restructuring of loss-making airlines to lower costs.

Mr. Gaillard said the Asia-Pacific region was the motor of current growth. IATA predicts the region will account for more than half of worldwide passenger traffic by 2010. Traffic in Europe is growing more slowly.

Financial Markets
In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank
U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close	New York Close
	18/2/1995	17/2/1995
Sterling Pound	1.5785	1.5825
Deutsche Mark	1.4890	1.4810
Swiss Franc	1.4603	1.4525
French Franc	5.1380	5.1540
Japanese Yen	97.41	97.36
European Currency Unit	1.2618	1.2672

U.S. Dollar in Local Markets
Date: 18/2/1995

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	5.31	6.06	6.82	7.31
Sterling Pound	6.37	6.50	6.81	7.36
Deutsche Mark	4.75	4.81	5.00	5.43
Swiss Franc	3.37	3.62	3.81	4.18
French Franc	5.31	5.56	5.93	6.43
Japanese Yen	2.66	2.66	2.12	2.25
European Currency Unit	5.67	5.74	6.25	6.81

Previous Metals
Date: 18/2/1995

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	378.25	7.58	Silver	4.79	0.111

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin
Date: 18/2/1995

Currency	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	0.6950	0.6970
Sterling Pound	1.0590	1.1045
Deutsche Mark	0.4624	0.4697
Swiss Franc	0.5547	0.5573
French Franc	0.1367	0.1384
Japanese Yen	0.7139	0.7175
Dutch Guilder	0.4179	0.4200
Swedish Krona	0.0432	0.0434
Italian Lira	0.0432	0.0434
Belgian Franc	0.0432	0.0434

Other Currencies
Date: 18/2/1995

Currency	Buy	Sell
Bahraini Dinar	1.3380	1.3490
Lebanese Lira	0.041299	0.042330
Saudi Riyal	0.1250	0.1266
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.3250	1.3500
Qatari Riyal	0.1900	0.1922
Egyptian Pound	0.1900	0.1900
Omani Riyal	1.7960	1.8130
UAE Dirham	0.1287	0.1293
Czech Dracina	0.0435	0.0435
Cypriot Pound	1.4243	1.5300

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 18/02/1995

COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLC	360	67575	187.250	188.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	250	1095	4.310	4.380
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	1081	4613	4.220	4.300
BANK OF JORDAN	250	888	3.550	3.550
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	1900	2760	1.420	1.450
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	250	487	1.950	2.750
THE HOUSING BANK	2250	13523	6.010	6.010
JORDAN KUALITY BANK	1175	3546	2.990	3.020
JORDAN GULF BANK	6850	9919	1.450	1.450
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	9877	3780	3.830	3.830
BUSINESS BANK	250	880	3.550	3.520
BETT ELMAL SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	250	788	3.100	3.150
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	31080	41179	1.300	1.330
PELLEPPEL INVESTMENT BANK	8250	12222	1.420	1.460
BANKS SECTOR	64043	197484	INDEX NUMBER: 160.55	CHANGE: +0.592
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	6550	16377	2.430	2.500
INSURANCE SECTOR	6550	16377	INDEX NUMBER: 136.75	CHANGE: +0.332
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	22196	3687	1.540	1.570
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	143500	211770	1.440	1.490
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	13650	47053	3.410	3.430
JORDANIAN PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	9800	23216	2.310	2.390
JORDANIAN PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	2650	2571	970	970
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALBAI	300	3578	11.650	12.000
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODITY HOTELS	1522	3744	2.440	2.450
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	3000	11054	3.640	3.680
SERVICES SECTOR	196618	337671	INDEX NUMBER: 133.61	CHANGE: +1.164
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	107	3680	34.500	34.500
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	22381	67252	2.950	3.010
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	2250	6413	2.850	2.850
THE JORDAN POTASH	100	508	5.050	5.060
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	1450	13905	9.400	9.400
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	386	1539	3.850	4.000
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	28586	133689	4.500	4.730
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	1012	612	5.800	5.800
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	2200	5992	2.680	2.720
SPINNING & WEAVING	1300	3354	2.570	2.580
KAPPA INDUSTRIES	3150	8928	2.830	2.930
THE AL DANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	2000	16270	7.770	8.10
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	27450	27412	960	1.010
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	1400	9730	6.700	6.920
ALUMINUM & POLYMER	1400	51828	3.710	3.710
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	24950	36069	1.410	1.460
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1400	3533	2.470	2.520
JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	250	35	1.400	1.420
JORDANIAN CEMENTS & MARCH/INDCO	24510	19513	750	800
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	1750	8490	4.820	4.850
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	250	443	1.730	1.770
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	20250	5428	2.560	2.650
KANTHER INVESTMENT	440	440	1.700	1.750
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	3400	14589	4.200	4.290
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	27600	59309	2.050	2.150
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	244860	505416	INDEX NUMBER: 125.94	CHANGE: +1.482
GRAND TOTAL	512071	1056949	INDEX NUMBER: 144.38	CHANGE: +0.932
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	174097			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	209751			

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Hagi injury adds to Cruyff's problems
DRID (R) — Romanian World Cup star Gheorghe Hagi has torn a muscle in his left leg during training and will be out of action for a month, making coach Johan Cruyff's search for new foreign talent at Barcelona all the more urgent. "It's bad, I'm shattered," the midfielder said. He was helped from Barcelona's training ground to a clinic after lunging for a ball during a regular team session in Thursday. Hagi has had problems throughout his career with abdominal injuries in both legs. The 28-year-old has fought his way back into the first team after missing much of the early season on the bench. Hagi will miss the Catalan derby between Barcelona and Espanol in the league on Saturday. Hagi is expected to miss the European Cup clash with Paris Saint Germain in Spain on March 1.

Privalova to run in Birmingham
NDON (R) — Europe's leading women's sprinter Irina Privalova, who has broken one world indoor record and set another this year, will run in the Birmingham International athletics meeting February 25. In a statement Friday, the organisers said Privalova would compete in the 100 metres, 200 metres, 400 metres, 800 metres and 1000 metres titles in Helsinki last year. This month she broke the world 50 metres record in Madrid on the way to winning the world 60 metres record of 6.92 seconds. Privalova is the most successful women's indoor sprinter, winning six European and two world indoor 60 metres titles.

Cantona arrives in France
RIS (R) — Manchester United's controversial soccer star Eric Cantona arrived in France on Saturday from the Guadeloupe island, witnesses said. Cantona, accompanied by his wife and son, landed at Orly Airport at 0700 GMT and took a taxi for an unknown destination. Cantona had been in Guadeloupe following the decision to ban him from the rest of the English season after attacking a fan in a notorious incident at Crystal Palace last month. In Guadeloupe, the Frenchman was then jailed in trouble with a British television news reporter who has said Cantona kicked him in the chest and threatened him.

Egyptian heads African handball
AGADOUGOU (R) — Egyptian Nahil Salem has been elected president of the African Handball Confederation at the group's 10th congress in the Burkina Faso capital Ouagadougou. Delegates from about 30 countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe, met on Friday. Salem, 45, is a former national team player and coach. He was elected president with special responsibility for administration and finance. Kitjidi Zortino from Congo takes over as secretary general while Almani Diaby of Guinea takes over as treasurer.

French grounds closed after violence
RIS (R) — The French Soccer Federation has banned one-match stadium bans to Lyon, Marseille and Nice after incidents during second round cup matches two weeks ago. The clubs will have to play their next home matches at an alternative venue. The federation's disciplinary committee suspended Lyon's Gerland Stadium for one match and fined the club 2,000 French francs (\$400) after supporters threw missiles and injured a ball boy during the game. Lyon lost 3-1. Marseille's stadium was suspended for one match and the southern club fined 3,000 francs (\$600). Nice received a one-match ban and a fine of 1,000 francs (\$200) because of the "permanent bombardment" of Marseille's goalkeeper during the Nice-Marseille game, also won 1-0, by Marseille.

American balloonist makes trans-Pacific bid
SOUL (R) — An American balloonist took off from South Korea early on Saturday in an attempt to make what would be the first solo balloon crossing of the Pacific Ocean. The balloon took off on its 8,800 km (5,599 mile) journey from Seoul's Olympic stadium before dawn on Saturday. The balloon was piloted by Steve Fossett, 50, a stockbroker from Chicago. Fossett told reporters shortly before takeoff that he aimed to reach San Francisco within four days and at the flight was to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule.

Murakami to work with Giants
OTTSDALE, Arizona (AFP) — Masanori Murakami, whose stint as a Giants pitcher made him the only Japanese to play major league baseball, will be a guest coach at San Francisco during spring training. Murakami, 50, will work with pitching instructor Les Moss and other coaching coaches. Murakami, who compiled a 5-1 record with the Giants in 1964-65, will also be honoured by the club with "Masanori Murakami Night" at Candlestick Park on August 5, when the Giants host the Dodgers. The Giants had planned to mark the 30th anniversary of Murakami's major league debut last August 20, but the date intervened.

Karpov, Kamsky in chess final
NEW DELHI (R) — Defending world chess champion Anatoly Karpov will meet Gata Kamsky of the U.S. in the International Chess Federation (FIDE) championships final, after winning a semi-final on Saturday. Indian news agencies said. Karpov beat Boris Gelfand of Belarus by six wins to three in the semi-final round held at Sanghi Nagar in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad. The 43-year-old Russian won the ninth match in 36 moves.

U.S. TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE
Taxpayer service specialist from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service will be at the American Embassy in Amman from March 6 to March 9 to assist U.S. taxpayers. Special tax seminars will be conducted on Monday March 6 and Tuesday March 7 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. in the United States Information Service auditorium at the Embassy. All U.S. citizens, residents or non-residents, with general tax questions, How to file? What to file? will be welcome to attend one of those seminars. No reservation is necessary. Individual assistance will be provided by appointment on March 6 to 9. Each taxpayer is advised to bring a copy of his or her last filed return and to have papers well organised to the extent possible in appearing for an appointment. The IRS representative will assist by answering questions but will not fill out tax return forms. Appointments may be made by calling 820-101, extension 2062. Some tax forms and information booklets are now available in the consular section of the embassy.

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Wachter wins giant slalom race

ARE, Sweden (R) — Austria's Anita Wachter won a women's World Cup giant slalom race Saturday, according to provisional results. Vreni Schneider of Switzerland was second and Deborah Compagnoni of Italy finished third. Wachter's victory provided some consolation for her disappointment at the recent postponement of the World Championships in Sierra Nevada.

After a poor start to the season, the Austrian captured her form in the new year with two victories and a second place and would certainly have been a major force if the world event had gone ahead in Spain. "When the championship was off I went home to rest," said Wachter. "I wasn't really prepared for this race. But my first run was excellent. I'm as good as ever."

She promised to continue skiing next season, when the Spanish organisers will make a second attempt to stage the World Championships. Her victory on Saturday lifted the Austrian to fifth in the overall World Cup standings. But with 593 points, she appears to have little chance of overhauling Katja Seizinger of Germany as she did in the World Cup finale at Are two years ago.

Seizinger, 17th on Saturday, leads overall on 893 points, ahead of Heidi Zeller-Bachler on 821 and World Cup holder Schneider on 742. American Picabo Street, who won Friday's downhill ahead of Seizinger, is fourth on 605.

U.S. indoor athletics tour

Joyner-Kersey, Foster rally to victories

CLEVELAND, Ohio (AFP) — U.S. athletics veterans Jackie Joyner-Kersey and Greg Foster pulled off dramatic victories in the men's and women's 60m hurdles at the KeyCorp indoor athletics meeting here on Friday.

Joyner-Kersey trailed Jamaica's Michelle Freeman through most of the women's 60m hurdles, but a finishing burst lifted her to victory in 7.93 seconds. "I'm very pleased," Joyner-Kersey said. "The running surface was great and that was my fastest time this year. I saw Michelle out there and said to myself, 'Come on, Jackie,' but I really didn't worry about what she was doing. I always try to concentrate on me."

Freeman was second in 8:00 and Dawn Bowles was third in 8:26. Foster, who decided to come out of retirement to bid for a fourth outdoor world title this season, won the men's 60m hurdles in 7:57 seconds. The excitement in that race came at the blindingly quick start, which was so fast that Mark Crear pulled up expecting a false-start call on Foster. "They didn't call it back, so I guess it was a real good start," said Foster. "I learned my lesson years ago. Unless I hear something else, I keep going."

Foster, who won three consecutive 110m hurdles world titles in 1983, 1987 and 1991, said he was using the indoor season to "gear up for the outdoors." Specifically, he wants to regain the 110m world crown seized by Britain's Colin Jackson in 1993. "My goal is really to win a fourth outdoor world championship," the 36-year-old said.



Mozambican Maria Mutola shouts for joy after winning her 34th straight victory (AFP photo)



Chinese athlete Sun Caiyun waves a bunch of flowers after setting a new pole vault world record (AFP photo)

Ireland's Marcus O'Sullivan won the mile in 3:59.49. Moroccan Said Aoudia finished a disappointing fifth in 4:07.24. American Butch Reynolds held off Calvin Davis to win the 400m in 48.45 seconds. Though the time was unspectacular, Reynolds, an Ohio native, got a standing ovation. In the 60m sprints, Olympic 200m champion Gwen Torrence won the women's in 7.13 and Henry Neal won the men's in 6.56 ahead of Michael Green of Jamaica (6.58). Kevin Toth won the shot.

put with the longest throw in the world this year, 21.17m. Maria Mutola of Mozambique won the women's 800m for her 34th straight victory. "I know that someday I am going to have to lose to somebody, but right now I am winning and I am very happy," said Mutola, who won in 2:00.17. American Joetta Clark was second in 2:04.85. China's Sun aims for more records.

China's Sun Caiyun, who broke the women's indoor pole vault world record three times in less than a week, returned to Beijing to a heroine's welcome on Friday.

and said she hoped to keep setting the standard. "I hope I can clear 4.20 metres in the near future," XINHUA news agency quoted Sun as saying. The 21-year-old Sun, from China's booming southern province of Guangdong, cleared 4.15m at the Erfurt Indoor athletics meeting in Germany on Wednesday.

That vault broke the 4.13m record she set in Karlsruhe on Sunday, completing an extraordinary series in Germany where she set five world bests in under three weeks.

Sun, who stands 1.7m tall, set her first record with a vault of 4.10m in Suhl on January 28. Six days later she managed 4.11m in Pulheim and then cleared 4.12m in Berlin on February 10, two days before competing in Karlsruhe. Her coach, Chen Guoming, was optimistic she could smash the world record again. "Hopefully, the women's pole vault may become a demonstration event in the 1996 Olympics, and a medal event in 2,000," Chen said. "I hope Sun can finish 4.30m in Atlanta."

McLaren unveil a radical new car

LONDON (AFP) — McLaren Mercedes unveil a radical, five wing Formula One car Friday in which Briton Nigel Mansell and Mika Hakkinen of Finland will challenge for the 1995 World Championship. "It's got half as well as it looks," said Mansell, "we'll be in good shape."

The car's design, with a small extra wing protruding from the top rear end of the engine cover, as well as the usual two front wings and a double rear wing, is "pushing the regulations to the limits," Mansell commented. The McLaren MP 4/10 is the first car built to the tighter 1995 aerodynamic rules to show such a radical feature, though other teams are known to have explored the idea.

McLaren International Managing Director Ron Dennis said his team believed that it was clearly inside the rules "in black and white, not in any grey area." He said McLaren was so confident of its interpretation of the rules that it had not asked the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) for a ruling on the legality of the wing.

Teams have been encouraged by the FIA to check any new features rather than risk them being banned when they arrive at the tracks. "We have moved away from the traditional forms of

the McLaren cars this year, to claw back as much as possible of the aerodynamic downforce lost by the new regulations," Dennis said. "We have studied the regulations very closely and we haven't gone over the limit. The major factor for us is that the car has to be legal," Dennis said.

Chief Designer Neil Oatley said the radical new wing would certainly be used in preliminary testing, but said he "could not promise that this is the definitive wing you will see all season."

The lower rear of the car is tightly shrouded by bodywork and Dennis said it would stay that way as long as possible, "to avoid giving away secrets of the other critical aerodynamic area."

The British Limor company, building the Mercedes F1 engine, designed its new engine with a particularly narrow bottom end to fit the aerodynamics. Limor designer Mario Illien said. So far 12 engines have been built, and the team will have 22 available for the first race in Brazil March 26.

The new car will start shake down tests at Silverstone next week, with Hakkinen driving, and then go to Estoril in Portugal the following week, where Mansell will join in the testing. In the past, McLaren has often only completed its new

car days before the first race, and the launch this year is unusually early for the team. Dennis attributed this to it being completely designed on computers for the first time. It will have five chassis completed by start of the season. Oatley added.

The car was presented London's Science Museum, with the highlight on its high tech features, including the claimed use of more carbon fibre than any other racing car. A few feet away, schoolchildren were looking at a 1903 stationary steam engine with a 24 foot flywheel, weighing 72 tonnes. It produced 700 horsepower, about the same as the 3 litre Mercedes engine in the McLaren.

America's Cup Relentless Nippon beat Sydney 95

SAN DIEGO, California (AFP) — In a close, dramatic race, the Japanese boat Nippon beat the Australian boat America's Cup defender Australia II by 4 minutes over a 24-hour race.

After stunning France with a victory by 4 minutes over the French boat, Nippon sailed to victory by 41 seconds at the first mark. The lead might have been better, but after starting helmsman-tactician Neville Wintney forced Nippon helmsman John Cutler over the starting line early, Wintney tacked away, allowing Nippon to dip back to the line and start only six seconds behind. Wintney was back aboard after a day off because of the flu, and on the first downwind run he started feeling so unwell that he was taken off

frustrating postponements over the past few weeks. Sunday 95, the only unsponsored, all-white boat in the event, led the Japanese by 41 seconds at the first mark. The lead might have been better, but after starting helmsman-tactician Neville Wintney forced Nippon helmsman John Cutler over the starting line early, Wintney tacked away, allowing Nippon to dip back to the line and start only six seconds behind.

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Chechens filter back to smashed Grozny

GROZNY, Russia (R) — People of Grozny crept back to their homes on Saturday, many seeing for the first time the devastation wrought in the city by two months of war between the Russian army and Chechen separatists.

Russian and Chechen field commanders agreed earlier to meet in Grozny on Saturday and exchange lists of each side's prisoners. But there was no sign of the exchange taking place anywhere in the Chechen capital.

The Russian-run centre of the city was quiet except for occasional detonations and bursts of small-arms fire. Some of the detonations were controlled explosions as Russian troops deactivated rockets and shells from the worst of the fighting.

"It's been pretty quiet for more than a week. There have only been sporadic shots fired from the other side," said 21-year-old Volodya, a Russian marine.

He was part of a group of marines from Vladivostok who held an ad hoc memorial ceremony for four colleagues killed on Feb. 6 near the bus station in southern Grozny — a key battlefield for weeks.

They had scrawled the phrase "to the dead" on a wall. Four of the marines raised Kalashnikov rifles and fired a salute in the air.

Russia sent troops to Chechnya on Dec. 11 to crush the southern region's three-year-old independence bid.

On the third day of a fragile ceasefire, crowds of civilians moved slowly through Grozny's shattered streets in brilliant sunshine. Most were ethnic Russians although a few Chechens were also visible.

Some were returning to Grozny after weeks as re-

fugees. Some were leaving their homes or moving from burned-out homes to shelter with relatives.

Those coming back saw that whole areas between the first battleground around separatist President Dzhokhar Dudayev's palace and the crucial Minutka junction further south have been laid waste.

Two middle-aged Russian sisters trudged along one street. Like the rest of the tattered crowd, they kept to the track along the middle of the road which had been cleared of rubble. The sidewalks were piled high with debris.

"This is the Soviet reality. We've been engineers for 25 years. This is all we have left," said one of the sisters, 51-year-old Tatyana Utkina. The pair were pushing a little cart piled with sacks of clothing and books.

"Thanks a lot to Dudayev, who's hiding his fighters in the city. If he were a real man he wouldn't be hiding behind ordinary people," she added.

Mr. Dudayev is at a secret location, probably south of Grozny.

Two Chechen sisters were carrying a green box once used to store ammunition as they headed from the city to the nearby town of Urus-Martan, a stronghold of Chechnya's pro-Russian opposition.

They said the box contained the body of their father. They wanted to bury him in Urus-Martan, which has been untouched by the fighting.

Everywhere, old people were wandering the streets begging for food. The International Committee of the Red Cross was distributing truckloads of food in the city.

Old man, young girl injured by Israeli fire in Lebanon

SIDON, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers wounded an old man and a three-year-old girl when they fired shells and bullets at villages in southern Lebanon in revenge for two Hizbollah attacks, hospital officials said Saturday.

The girl was wounded by Israeli gunfire on Habbush after a bomb attack late Friday by guerrillas which wounded two Israeli soldiers.

Early Saturday shells slammed into the old man's house in Aarabshim after Hizbollah allies led an attack on a position of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) in Sojoud, in Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

SLA radio said the machinegun and rocket attacks on their position did not leave any casualties.

But it was followed by a violent artillery duel between the Hizbollah's paramilitary wing the Islamic Resistance and the Israeli army.

About 30 shells were targeted at SLA positions neighbouring Sojoud and Ghazlan, while dozens of

others fell on the Iqlim Al Tufah heights, a Hizbollah stronghold in southern Lebanon, police said. There were no casualties.

Meanwhile about 50 Lebanese soldiers took up positions along the coast of Tyre after an Israeli patrol ship fired at two fishing boats preventing their returning to port.

For the past 10 days the Israeli navy has been stopping fishermen from working at night and from venturing further than one kilometre from the coast of southern Lebanon in the daytime.

About 500 fishermen gathered at Tyre port on Saturday to protest the measures which threaten their income.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army command announced that soldier Votam Shaali, victim of a land mine explosion Friday in the "security zone," has succumbed to his wounds.

The latest casualties raised this year's toll in the south to 31 killed and 42 wounded. Among the dead were three Israelis and four SLA militiamen.

U.N. disarmament chief en route to Baghdad

MANAMA (Agencies) — U.N. disarmament chief Rolf Ekeus has arrived in Manama for a brief stopover en route for Iraq to press for further information on Baghdad's military programme, U.N. officials said.

Mr. Ekeus, who arrived late Friday, was due to leave Bahrain on Sunday for Baghdad accompanied by three U.N. staff.

"Our main objective is to put pressure on the Iraqi side to come clean on the past programmes," said Tim Trevan, the spokesman for Mr. Ekeus, who was accompanying him on the trip. "We don't believe the Iraqi story that all the documents were destroyed."

The U.N. Security Council is to meet in April to decide whether the time has come to lift the embargo clamped on Iraq since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The report that Mr. Ekeus will submit on the outcome of his two-to-four-day mission in Iraq could be instrumental.

Before leaving New York, Mr. Trevan had said Iraq had the equipment and experts to develop within weeks the deadly agents used in biological warfare.

There is no evidence that Iraq actually is building biological weapons, and Mr. Trevan acknowledged that the equipment also has legiti-

mate purposes, such as for producing medicine.

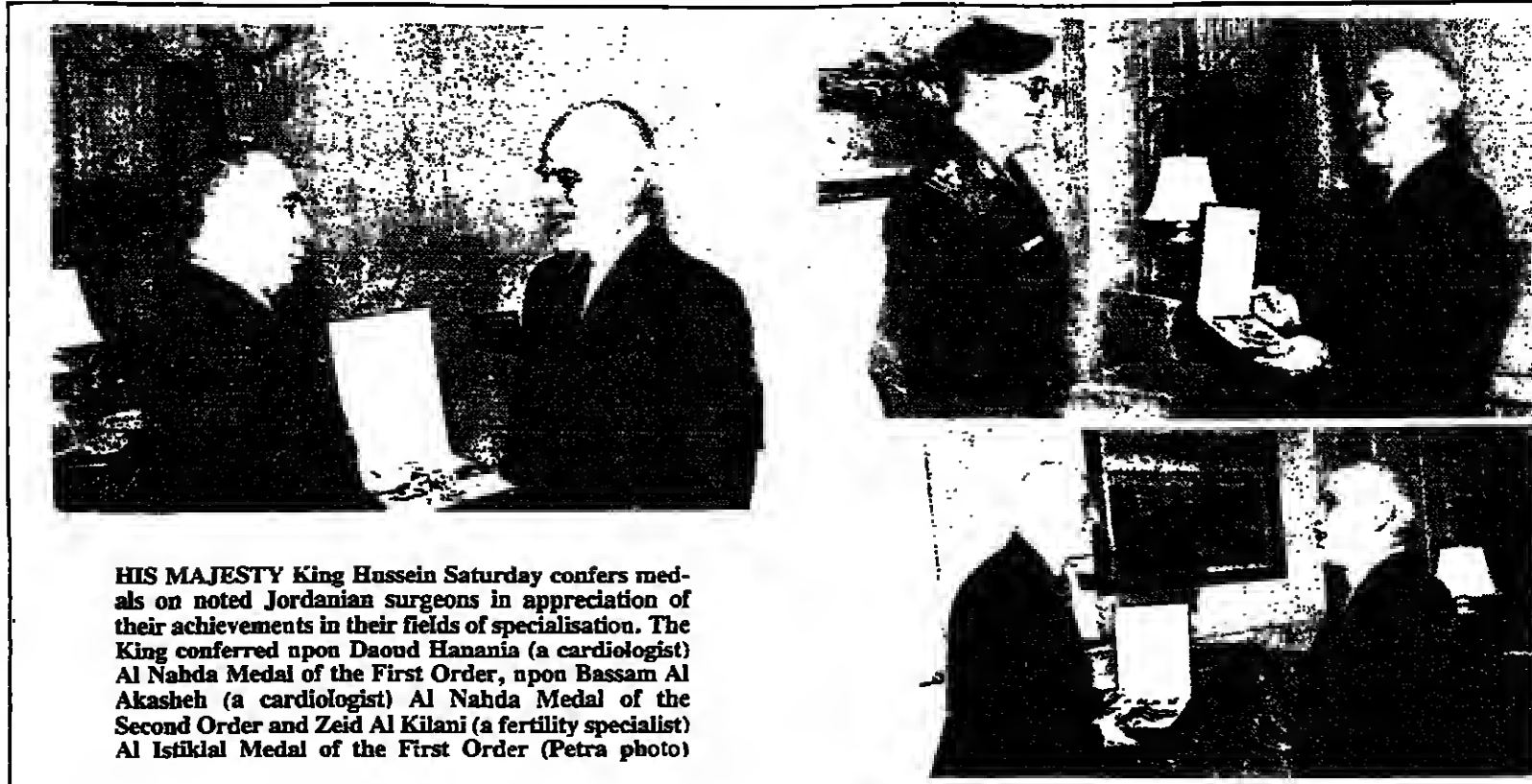
Mr. Ekeus heads the U.N. Special Commission responsible for overseeing the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and monitoring future compliance with Gulf war ceasefire resolutions.

The commission, wary that four years of work and a massive long-term arms monitoring system in place could be jeopardised if Iraq is thwarted too long on the sanctions, is producing its most favourable statements.

"The commission believes that Iraq has to know there is a process which is moving forward, and Iraq shouldn't be allowed to conclude that there is nothing in it for them," Mr. Trevan told reporters after Mr. Ekeus arrived in Bahrain.

More than 110 teams of U.N. inspectors since the Gulf war have destroyed all the prohibited nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programmes and long-range missiles that they identified.

A six-month test period for an elaborate monitoring system they set up, commanding 117 spy cameras and 20 sensors at sites that Iraq could clandestinely use to produce the prohibited weapons, will be over in April. Iraq has been cooperative throughout this stage.



HIS MAJESTY King Hussein Saturday confers medals on noted Jordanian surgeons in appreciation of their achievements in their fields of specialisation. The King conferred upon Daoud Hanania (a cardiologist) Al Nabha Medal of the First Order, upon Bassam Al Akasheh (a cardiologist) Al Nabha Medal of the Second Order and Zaid Al Kilani (a fertility specialist) Al Istiklal Medal of the First Order (Petra photo)

Gunmen kill Algerian mayor; murder suspects shot dead

TUNIS (Agencies) — Algerian security forces have killed five militants suspected of shooting dead a leading Berber feminist this week, the official Algerian news agency APS reported on Saturday.

The five men were killed near Tizi Ouzou, east of the capital Algiers, on Thursday, APS said, quoting security services.

Nabila Djahmane, 35, leader of the Berber feminist group Thighri N'Tmetouh (cry of woman), was gunned down on Wednesday outside her home in Tizi Ouzou, the main city in the Berber Kabylie region.

The Berbers are the aboriginal people of North Africa who have preserved a distinct culture in mountain regions.

The Algerian newspaper Liberté reported on Saturday that gunmen had shot dead Mohammed Idrenmoiche, mayor of the northern town of Draa Ben Khedda, on Thursday.

Fundamentalist guerrillas fighting the military-backed government are targeting more civilians to try to ensure that their actions receive publicity. The government imposes a blackout on killings of members of the security forces.

This week gunmen also killed the head of Algeria's

national theatre, the head of a student movement, a well-known singer-composer, and a newspaper reporter who was visiting his mother's grave.

"The tragedy of Algerian intellectuals, who have been persecuted by successive governments for decades, has now reached genocidal proportions," Liberté wrote.

Exactly as promised (by the Islamic militants), Algerians are living an unprecedented bloody Ramadan.

Western sources estimate that more than 30,000 people have been killed in Algeria's war since January 1992 when military-backed authorities cancelled a general election which the Islamists were poised to win.

APS reported on Friday that security forces had killed 39 Muslim fundamentalist guerrillas in a three-day sweep this week.

The justice minister announced Saturday the closing down of three specialised terrorism and subversion courts.

Mohammad Tegui told the government daily Al Moudjahid: "Terrorist or subversive acts will be treated by the competent criminal or correctional courts applying the penal procedure and penal code."

He said that the military-backed legislative power, the National Transitional Council, had agreed on "democracy measures" for repenting fundamentalists, including the withdrawal of the death penalty for fundamentalists who repented.

Thousands of mourners flocked Friday to Tlemcen for the funeral of the murdered musician Baba Ahmad, better known by his stage name "Rachid," who was killed Thursday in the western city of Oran.

Dozens of artists and politicians joined in as mourners filed through Rachid's home town for the burial of the musician, one of the leading promoters of Rai music that started up in the late 1970s.

Rachid was shot dead by armed men Thursday close to a music shop he owned in Oran, home of the popular Rai music frowned on by Islamic fundamentalists.

The security forces had no information on the shooting Friday.

Meanwhile, the French authorities in Paris said they had given political asylum to an Algerian lawyer and a magistrate who have come under attack from both the Algerian authorities and the fundamentalists.

Legal battle looms over Iranian daily

TEHRAN (AFP) — A political and legal battle is brewing between the government and a banned newspaper representing Islamic left-wingers in Iran, with both sides accusing the other of breaking the law.

The director of Jahan-e-Islam (world of Islam), Hadi Khamenei, on Saturday accused the government of ordering the ban for political reasons.

He said in an interview with Salam daily that the Culture Ministry was not qualified to order the closure of his newspaper and called for the issue to be resolved in court.

The government hit back accusing Jahan-e-Islam of "demagoguery and a continuing unhealthy trend in breaking the law" and said it intended to press charges against several journalists at the paper.

The paper, representing Islamic leftists who have steadily been sidelined from power in the past few years, was ordered to stop publishing last week after it printed several stories critical of the government.

The government has accused the daily, run by the brother of Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, of insulting Islam and printing lies.

But Hadi Khamenei said the ministry had not been able to give any examples.

He added the daily had filed a suit against the decision to ban the paper and that it intended to pursue "all other legal channels available" to regain its rights.

Mr. Khamenei said he suspected the decision was politically motivated. "In raising comments which are more political and partisan, the ministry officials have raised a suspicion that their decision was taken based on political considerations."

He said the ban could have been ordered to silence the

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indonesia seeks higher Haj quota

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesia will ask Saudi Arabia for a 40,000-person increase in its quota for Haj pilgrims this year in the face of a surge in applications to more than 230,000, a newspaper report said here Saturday. The Jakarta Post daily said Minister for Religious Affairs Tarmizi Tamer left for Saudi Arabia Friday to request for the increase. "We will try to convince the Saudi government to accept thousands of people now on the waiting list," Mr. Tarmizi was quoted as saying before leaving. "However, I'm not going to engage in wishful thinking. So that the prospective pilgrims won't have any false hopes," he added. Mr. Tarmizi said some 240,000 Indonesians originally registered for the Haj pilgrimage this year, but about 10,000 backed out amid reports they would be put on the waiting list. The Saudi government has limited Indonesian pilgrims to only 192,000 this year. The Religious Affairs Department handles pilgrimages in Indonesia, where around 90 per cent of the 190 million people adhere to the Muslim faith.

58 killed in Kurdish clashes in north Iraq

TEHRAN (AFP) — At least 58 people have been killed in the latest clashes between rival Kurdish factions in northern Iraq, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported Saturday. More than 30 people were also injured in an attack by the Hizbollah group in the Kurdish-held region and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) on the forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) around the town of Rawanduz. A PUK commander, Aziz Faghiani, was among the dead, IRNA said, without giving casualty figures for the other groups which have besieged the town for the past two weeks. The agency, quoting a Hizbollah spokesman, said the KDP and pro-Iranian Hizbollah had captured strategic heights around Rawanduz in northeastern Iraq. IRNA said Friday that the fighting had escalated around the town and that the situation was turning critical for residents of Rawanduz. The PUK and KDP, which control northern Iraq under a Western security umbrella in defiance of Baghdad, have been locked in a deadly power struggle since last May.

Egypt to spend \$15 million to protect pyramids

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt is to spend \$15 million cleaning up and protecting the ancient pyramids of Giza, the last of the seven wonders of the world to survive, an official said Saturday. Head of Giza's antiquities department Zahi Hawass said a plan was launched this week to protect the pyramids plateau and serve the unique character of the region at a cost of 50 million Egyptian pounds (\$15 million). Under the plan, four square kilometres would be cleared of litter and stones while the department's offices will be moved and the site reserved for camels and horses. Mr. Hawass said. He said the work would take several months to complete and would also include building a wall to separate the neighbouring village of Nazlat Al Samman from the site to stop the spread of urbanisation. Dozens of "hovels built illegally on the plateau" will also be pulled down. Last year Egypt was forced to suspend work on a motorway near the site following protests from the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). A new route has now been chosen to avoid the pyramids.

Peace process on verge of collapse — Abdul Meguid

BEIRUT (AFP) — The Middle East peace process is teetering on the edge of collapse because Israel has adopted a hard line since striking agreements with the Palestinians and Jordan, Arab League Chief Esmat Abdul Meguid has warned.

The secretary general told AFP that the peace process was in "real danger" and added, "we have to make progress fast otherwise things are going to deteriorate and will place all the parties in a worse situation."

The former Egyptian foreign minister blamed Israel for taking a tougher stand and asked, "Who has changed? The Arabs or the Israelis? We, the Arabs, haven't changed."

"The Israelis have done a U-turn and think that because they have signed an accord with the Palestinians in Oslo and then with the Jordanians that they can afford the luxury of sitting back."

Under accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Palestinian self-rule was launched in the Gaza Strip and Jericho in May. But talks on extending autonomy on the West Bank have since been deadlocked amid a series of anti-Israeli attacks.

Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty in October ending 46 years of hostilities. But the Israeli-Syrian-Lebanese track of the peace process has made little progress since its launch at the October 1991 Madrid peace conference.

"Two Arab partners have moved quicker than the others, but there will never be total peace without Syria or Lebanon," Dr. Abdul Meguid warned in the interview in French, conducted late Friday in the Lebanese capital.

He also said that a war of words between Israel and Egypt, which made peace in 1979, over the Jewish state's nuclear programme was a "real crisis."

Egypt, with the backing of the 22 Arab League members, is refusing to renew its signature on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in April in New York if Israel does not join.

But Israel has refused, citing special security concerns, and will not confirm Western reports that it possesses around 200 nuclear warheads.

"Against whom in the region does Israel want nuclear security? Against Iran. That's just an excuse," Mr. Abdul Meguid charged, adding that the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Hans Blix, had said Iran did not possess the means of acquiring a nuclear capacity.

He also warned Israel not to fall into the trap of thinking "they can threaten Egypt. This war of words will only encourage radicalism" in the region.

Turning to the unrest in Algeria, Dr. Abdul Meguid said that as it was an internal conflict the Arab League had not become involved although it should be doing more.

He was in contact with Algerian leaders and would be ready to help if asked. "What is taking place in Algeria is very dramatic, and not something that the Muslim world can ever accept," said the Arab League chief.

Russia to build 3 more nuclear reactors for Iran

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia is to help to sign an agreement to build three nuclear power reactors for Iran, in addition to another reactor currently being built there, the Russian Nuclear Energy Ministry said here Saturday.

A ministry spokesman told the news agency Interfax that the three reactors — a light water VVER-100 reactor and two VVER-440 reactors — would be built at an Iranian nuclear plant at the southern Gulf town of Bushehr.

The spokesman added that Russia would also build a desalting installation with a nuclear reactor for Iran, and help to train Iranian nuclear specialists.

Russia recently signed a contract to complete a half-finished nuclear reactor at Bushehr on which German

engineers had been working before the Islamic revolution in 1979, and to provide enriched uranium needed to run it.

Interfax quoted another ministry official as denying that Iran could use the Russian-built reactors to produce weapons-grade nuclear materials.

He said that the Bushehr reactors would be built under supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and that they were open to international control since Iran had signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty.

A Russian government ecological safety official, Aleksei Yablokov, had warned that Iran could use the Russian-made reactors to build a nuclear bomb.

Experimental arms will create enmity — Somali leader

MOGADISHU (AFP) — A U.S. decision to equip its troops in Mogadishu with experimental crowd-control weapons will create "bitter enmity," a powerful Somali faction leader, warned Saturday.

The American soldiers, arriving here around the beginning of March, will be equipped with sticky foam shots fired from guns as "high-tech lassos," barrier foam laced with teargas, wooden and rubber pellets instead of bullets.

The arsenal is designed to provide protection without spilling blood.

The U.S. Marines will come ashore on Mogadishu's beaches with Italian troops

COLUMBIA

Clinton eulogises Fulbright

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Former Senator William Fulbright was eulogised by onetime apprentice, President Bill Clinton, who said the country was in his debt for speaking out against Vietnam War. "In the end, he did, the words he spoke and the life he lived," Fulbright stood against the 20th century's most destructive forces and fought to advance its brightest hopes," Clinton said. Mr. Clinton delivered the eulogy at a memorial at the National Cathedral attended by family and friends of the former Arkansas senator, who died of stroke last week at age 89. Fulbright was a former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Sen. Fulbright was virtually alone in Congress challenging then President Lyndon Johnson's course of military escalation in Vietnam in the mid 1960s. Sen. Fulbright also is known for the international scholarship programme that bears his name and which was established in 1946. Mr. Clinton, who worked for the senator while a student at Georgetown University, recalled Fulbright's anguish "in the great struggle over Vietnam. We never forgot the debt that we owe him and the debt to our country owes him," Mr. Clinton said.

Hunter sparks alert on border

AMMAN (AFP) — A hunter in Jordan sparked an alert when he fired in the direction of Israeli soldiers along the border of the two countries, a Jordanian official said Sunday.

The official said a Jordanian soldier fired at a man who discovered a hunter looking for boars in the area. An Israeli army spokesman said earlier that he had searched both sides of the border after the scare Sunday. Jordanian soldiers issued a hunting rifle after a search but the hunter escaped, the spokesman said.

Kohl faces meniscus operation

BONN (AFP) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl will "very soon" undergo a knee operation on his right knee which he has been putting off for weeks, deputy government spokesman Rainer Schmuelling said Friday.

Mr. Schmuelling did not confirm a report in the Munich Merkur daily, which said German national team doctor Ernst-Otto Muehleth would operate on Mr. Kohl next Wednesday.

Thursday in Munich. He explained the exact date was being kept secret to ward off too much public interest. Wednesday sees Mr. Kohl last confirmed diary date, however, when he recovers from the operation.

The festive period usually brings government business to a halt.

U.K. royal policeman sues over palace fall

LONDON (R) — A policeman who fell while on duty at Windsor Castle, suing the queen for £250,000 (\$394,600) compensation, British newspaper said Saturday.

Former policeman Roger Mathastein, 45, was injured when he fell into a hole in the castle at Windsor when he moved a flagstone to get pipes beneath the Sun.

Mr. Mathastein severely injured his foot and shoulder. He was dismissed ten months later when it became clear he was unable to return to work because of his injuries.

Mr. Mathastein said Mr. Mathastein issued a high court writ against Britain's top legal official, Attorney General Nicholas Lyell, since the queen cannot be sued directly. But she would be sued Sunday, Abdullah bin Khalifa, president of the Islamic Renaissance Movement, told the newspaper Al-Naba' that the meeting would be organised "in as short a time as possible."

Algerian opposition plans new talks

PARIS (AFP) — Algerian secular and fundamentalist opposition groups who proposed a peace plan last month in Rome are planning to meet this time in Algeria, one of the signatories, said Sunday.

Abdullah bin Khalifa, president of the Islamic Renaissance Movement, told the newspaper Al-Naba' that the meeting would be organised "in as short a time as possible."

The EU... here yesterday, gone today?

BRUSSELS (R) — European Union (EU) is no more, at least according to a statement in French issued by the European Commission, the European Council and the European Court of Justice.

The statement said the former Soviet Republic of Georgia stated bluntly that the European Union was "integrated."

The "Georgia" population, subject to the extreme poverty since the collapse of the European Union, read the statement.

The English version referred to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The general assembly of the Agricultural Trade Association met on Saturday 18/02/95 to discuss the request for our association's lack of response to the adverse effects of his decision to export agricultural materials, hopefully before coming into conflict with the reversed directions of the instructions of the rightly guided government for the liberalisation of that private sector with a market oriented economy and more responsibility in agriculture.

The services and products offered by the technical assistance to the farmer, advanced services service, farm credit, etc. The production and products is proportionally small. Yet their value for production far exceeds this small proportion.

The general assembly consequently decided to deal with H.E. The Prime Minister Zaid Ibn Shaker, to hear our point of view.

Assad holding out against peace

BEIRUT (AFP) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad held out against the peace process, Israel's Foreign Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Sunday. He said Assad was not yet ready to end the war, but has not yet decided himself in peace. "He is at a half-way stage," Rabin said. "He is at a half-way stage between a war and a peace. He is not yet ready to end the war, but has not yet decided himself in peace." Rabin said. "He is at a half-way stage between a war and a peace. He is not yet ready to end the war, but has not yet decided himself in peace."

Volume 19 Number 5849

Interior Ministry official retired

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Cabinet on Sunday decided to retire the Minister of Interior General Khalil al-Khazal effective Monday. Sources told the Jordan Times. The sources said that the retired Governor Faysal al-Khazal was tipped to replace Mr. al-Khazal. The cabinet decided to retire Governor Faysal al-Khazal.

2 civil 3 other killed in Israel

MARIYATUL BLASTED RESTAURANT South Lebanon multiple assassins on an Israeli-occupied enclave.

The heaviest months killed two civilians, two an Israeli-occupied Lebanon Army wounded five security sources. SLA militiamen earlier clashes did.

White clouds engulfed the strike thousands of killed in the fighting. Israel reprisal.

where a 37-year-old 18-year-old killed, said sources. Amroed were two and an 11-year-old.

A total of 2 vehicles seized. Kfar Rounneh, said rescuers.

The guerrilla Israeli-occupied zone" was three months power and a strike struck.

including thousands of villages in southern hours, raised major showdown flaring Arab front.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT THE AGRICULTURAL TRADE ASSOCIATION

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